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No. 945

NOVEMBER 9, 1923

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

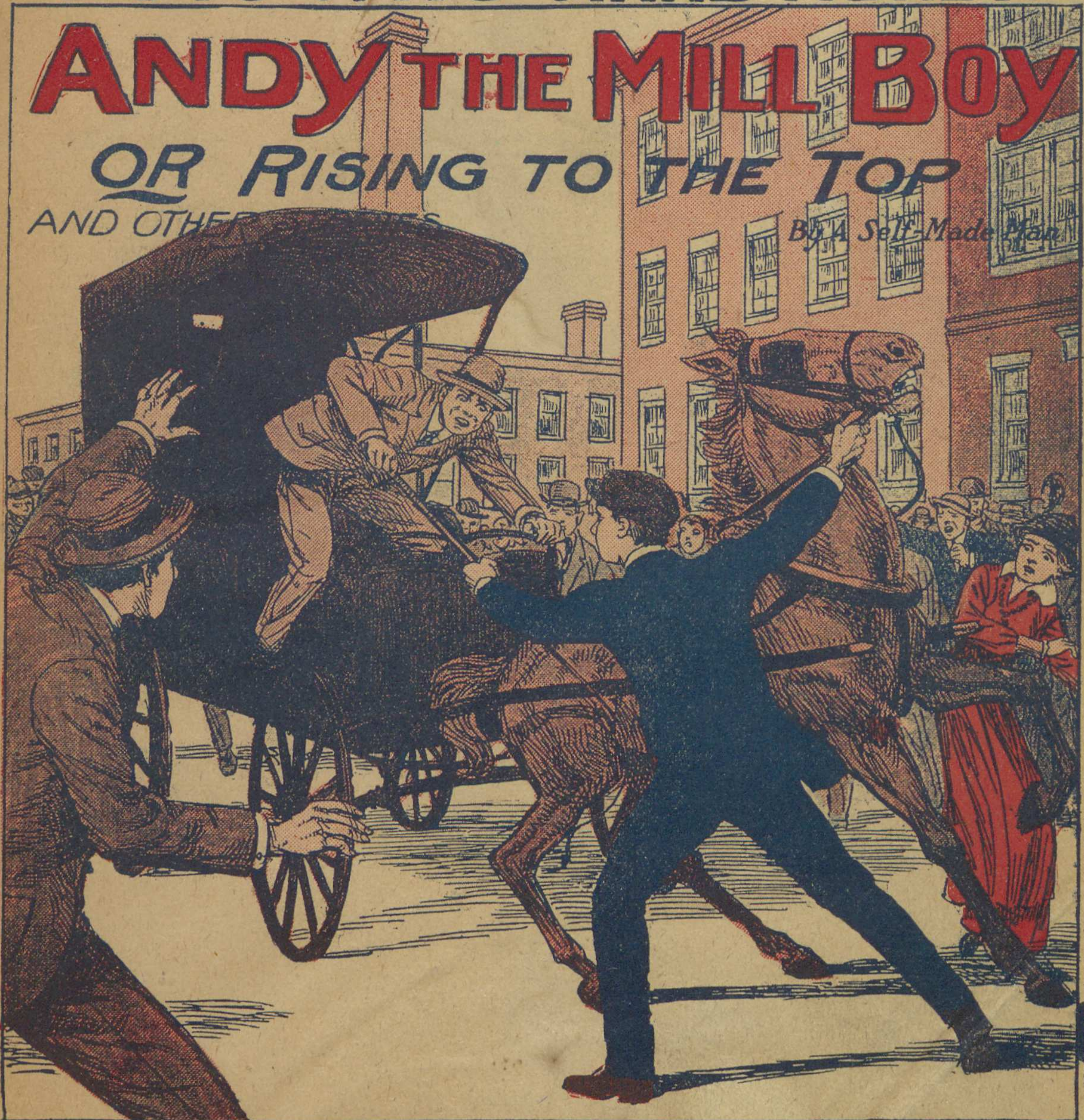
STORIES OF
BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

ANDY THE MILL BOY

OR RISING TO THE TOP

AND OTHER STORIES

By A Self-Made Man



"Get out of my way, you beggar!" exclaimed the young aristocrat, snapping the whiplash about Bob's ears. The young mill hand caught the lash with one hand and jerked the whip out of Dexter's hand. "Give me my whip, you villain!"

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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No. 945

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 9, 1923

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ANDY THE MILL BOY

OR, RISING TO THE TOP

By A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Ruby Norton.

"No, you shan't see me home, Dexter Pritchard!" exclaimed pretty and spirited Ruby Norton decidedly.

"Why not?" demanded the well-dressed youth, who, cane in hand, confronted the girl on the walk in front of the Bayport Woolen Mills, where she was employed as an operative.

"Because I don't wish you to."

"You put on a lot of frills for a mill hand," replied young Pritchard, in a disagreeable tone. "I should think you'd be glad to be seen walking with me."

"Well, I'm not—so there!" and she made a move to pass him.

"Hold on, I want to talk to you," said Dexter, barring her way.

"But I don't care to talk to you. I want to go home," she replied, a flush mounting to her face.

"Then let me walk along with you," he persisted, giving his natty little cane a twirl.

"No," she answered, flashing a defiant look at him.

Dexter Pritchard wasn't accustomed to being crossed in his desires, and he showed it in the petulant way he received the girl's reply. He was an only son and a spoiled boy. His father, Duncan Pritchard, was president and chief stockholder of the Bayport Woolen Mills. He was the best-dressed boy in that thriving little New England town; had plenty of money to spend on his own pleasures; was accorded a great deal more respect than he deserved, because his father was looked upon as the great man of the neighborhood, and what he didn't think of himself would have been hard to discover. Ruby Norton was the prettiest, as well as spunkiest, girl in Bayport.

There was nothing deceptive about Ruby. If she liked a person she showed it. That's why she and Bob Chambers, a curly-headed and good-looking mill hand of seventeen, were such excellent friends. She didn't like Dexter Pritchard, even if he was known to have money to burn, and his father practically owned the establishment where she put in six long days every week for far from princely wages, and that is all there was to it. Dexter Pritchard, on the contrary, was impressed with Ruby's good looks and piquant ways, and he wanted to monopolize her society when he felt so disposed.

"Don't you know I can have you fired from the mill if I've a mind to, Ruby Norton?" snarled Dexter, growing warm under the collar at her persistent refusal to permit him to enjoy the satisfaction he coveted.

"You wouldn't dare!" cried the girl indignantly.

"How do you know I wouldn't?" he retorted, thinking to bring her to her knees with this threat.

"Because it would be a contemptible thing for you to try to do," she replied, with flaming cheeks.

"Then don't make me do it," he said pointedly.

"Make you do it!" she flashed back scornfully. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Dexter Pritchard! You, the son of the president of the company, to try to force your society upon me, a mill girl, against my wishes! If I told you what I think of your conduct, you wouldn't like it."

"You're a little fool!" snorted the nabob's son angrily.

"Thank you for the compliment," she said disdainfully. "People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones."

"Allow me to pass."

She stepped around him with the air of a little queen, and was several yards away before he recovered from his discomfiture. He shook his cane threateningly at her retreating figure, then turned on his heel and walked away in the opposite direction. As he left the scene, a small gate in the fence which had been standing open an inch creaked on its rusty hinges and a shock of bright red hair appeared. Underneath was a grinning, freckled face, in which were set a pair of particularly bright eyes. The eyes followed the figure of Dexter Pritchard until he disappeared around the corner into Main street.

"You're a nice chap, you are, I don't think," muttered the watcher, whose name was Andy Ball.

He was employed in the engine-room of the mill, and was a particular friend of Bob Chambers. Pritchard had uttered his sentiments in a tone loud enough for Andy, who had been behind the gate from the moment Dexter had intercepted Ruby Norton on her way home, to overhear. Andy liked Ruby, too, in an unselfish way; but he well knew he wasn't in it with Bob, and he was too loyal a friend to get disgruntled over the matter.

"Hello, Andy, what are you muttering about

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and shaking your head like a mechanical Chinese mandarin for?" said a cheery voice at his elbow.

Andy looked around and found that Bob Chambers had come up unperceived, and was regarding him with a mischievous smile.

"Oh, it's you, is it?"

"I don't know that it is anybody else," chuckled Bob. "What were you kicking about, anyway, old man?"

"It wouldn't make you feel any too happy if I told you."

"Oh, then I'm mixed up in it, eh?"

"No, but Ruby is, and I know what that means to you."

"What about Ruby? Has anything happened to her?" cried Bob, gripping Andy by the arm, while a look of apprehension flew into his face.

"I s'pose I've got to tell you. That dude, Dexter Pritchard, has been annoying her."

"When?" cried Bob hotly.

"Don't get excited. It's all over."

"I want to know all about it. What's he been up to?"

"When the mill shut down half an hour ago he was outside the fence yonder waitin' for her."

"He was, eh? How do you happen to know that, Andy?"

"'Cause I seen him near that side gate when I poked my head out after wheelin' this load of ashes over to the dump. I wondered what he was doin' there, so I kept my eye on him. In a few minutes along came Ruby, all by herself. He stepped right up and spoke to her. She answered him perlately and was goin' on again when he planked himself in front of her."

"He's got a nerve."

"Ruby wouldn't have it, all right, and that made him mad. He tried to make her give in, but you know how spunky she is. When she doesn't want to do anythin', you can't make her, no-how."

"That's so," grinned Bob, who had had a varied experience with the girl himself, and he rather admired that quality in her.

"When he found he could not have his way with her, he threatened her."

"He did what?" roared Bob, instinctively doubling up his fists.

"He threatened to have her thrown out of the mill."

"You heard him say that?"

"I heard him plain enough."

"Ogden Wells, the manager, is a square man," said Bob. "He wouldn't discharge her without cause."

"I hope he wouldn't," replied Andy; "but he isn't the whole thing."

"Yes, he is; so far as running the business is concerned. No one has any right to interfere with the details of his management, not even Mr. Pritchard. He is the boss of the mill. He takes his orders from the president, it is true, but they relate only to the general conduct of the business. He is responsible for the economical production of the fruit of the loom."

"Fruit of the loom is good," grinned Andy. "That's poetical, isn't it?"

"Maybe it is. I heard our night-school teacher use the expression the other evening, and I thought it fitted the case pretty well."

"Then you think the manager wouldn't be in

no hurry to fire Ruby?" said Andy, with a look of relief.

"I am sure he wouldn't."

"Not even if Dexter Pritchard was to ask him."

"He'll find his work cut out if he tries any games against Ruby, for she is the pet of the mill. There isn't a man here but would take her part; and the girls, too, for that matter."

"Betcher life," said Andy, taking up his barrow again.

"You're goin' home now, ain't you, Bob?"

"Yes."

"I'll see you to-night, then. So-long."

Andy wheeled away and Bob cut across the yard and let himself out by the side gate.

CHAPTER II.—A Hint of Coming Trouble.

"Mother, I smell pork and beans," cried Bob Chambers, as he rushed into the small kitchen of the little cottage where the Chambers family lived on the outskirts of Bayport, grabbed his mother around the waist and gave her a hug and a kiss.

"Why, what a bear you are!" smiled the little woman, looking proudly at her stalwart son.

"Well, I'm hungry as one, at any rate," replied the boy, turning the faucet in the sink and proceeding to give his bright, young face a good scousing.

"Supper is all ready and waiting," said Mrs. Chambers.

"I tell you, those beans smell good. They hit my weak spot. I suppose Hattie is home."

"She's been in an hour."

Hattie Chambers gave music lessons on the piano to a dozen-odd pupils in the town, and in this way added materially to the family income, so that the Chambers lived very comfortably, indeed, in their own modest home, which Mr. Chambers had bought and paid for during his lifetime. The family of three were soon sitting at the table eating. After supper Andy came around, and the two boys went out together. It was Saturday evening, and there was no night school to attend. They were members of the Bayport Social Club, which had a modest room on the second floor of a frame building adjoining the engine-house of Hercules No. 1 on Main street. About twenty boys were connected with this organization, all of them employed in various Bayport industries. Bob Chambers was the president and the most popular member. Parker Jewett, who was sweet on Hattie Chambers, was secretary. Andy Ball was sergeant-at-arms. The latest addition to the club, and newest arrival in Bayport, was a young German named Jake Switzer. When Bob and Andy reached the club-room they found Jake outside waiting for somebody to open up.

"Goot efenings. I peen vaiting aboud fifdeen minudes for vun off you shaps to come by der places, so dot I got in," said Switzer, as Andy produced his key.

"You are an early bird," replied Bob.

"I ped you," grinned Jake. "I got me a leetle shob on handt."

"What kind of a job?"

"You didn't found out already yet dot I vos a pored sign painder—no?"

"A sign painter!" exclaimed Bob and Andy in a breath, after the three had entered the club-room.

"Sure ding. You see dose bieces off card-board?" said Jake, taking half a dozen from under his arm.

"We couldn't miss them," grinned Bob. "They're big enough."

"Vell, lisen. I baint some dings on dem for Bimler, der grocer."

He drew a chair up to a table, took a small paint-box from his pocket which bore a German trademark, filled a cup with water, and began operations under the curious and interested gaze of his two clubmates. That Switzer was an artist in this line was soon apparent. In the center of the first card he painted a large egg.

"Gee!" ejaculated Andy, "that looks natural enough to pick up. If a hen saw that egg she would want to sit on it right away."

"I ped you she vould," replied Jake. "Vunce ubon a dimes I painted a nest mit six eegs in id, und laid id on der grass to dry. An oldt she duck came by, sat on dot picture un dhatched oud six shickens."

"That's pretty good for you, Switzer," said Bob, "but if I were you I wouldn't tell it too often."

"Vhy nod?" beginning to letter the words "Fresh Eggs" in a semi-circle over the egg.

"It might egg-cite some doubt in the minds of your hearers as to its verisimilitude."

Jake stopped work and looked at Bob.

"Oxcoose me, but vhere did you found dot eggs-pressions?"

"In the dictionary."

"S'pose dot you toldt me vot it means."

"It means probability or the appearance of truth."

"Is dot so? Maype dot's a bolite vay to call me a liar, ain'd it?"

"Oh, no. Only you oughtn't to stretch the truth too far. By the way, why don't you make that read: 'Fresh-laid Eggs?'"

"For vhy? Eferybody knows der eggs vos fresh vhen dey vos laid."

"Eggs-actly, and that's all that it's safe for Binder to say about them."

"Vell, I got me noddings to do mit how long dose eggs peen laid. I make me dis signs to suid Bimler."

Just then a bunch of newcomers appeared in the room, among them Parker Jewett. Of course they all wanted to see what Switzer was doing, and one and all declared him to be a wonder. Just before the meeting was called to order, Jewett took Bob aside.

"I'm afraid there's going to be trouble at your factory."

"In what way?" asked Bob in surprise.

"There's going to be a meeting of the stockholders next week—my father is one, you know—and Duncan Pritchard intends to insist on a general reduction of wages. As there has been a ten per cent. cut already, I'm afraid the hands won't stand for it. What do you think?"

"I think there'll be something doing," replied Bob, with a sober face.

CHAPTER III.—The Stockholders' Meeting.

Apparently, nothing came of Dexter Pritchard's threat to have Ruby Norton discharged from the mill. If he had made the attempt it was unsuccessful. In the meantime it had come to be known from one end of the big mill to the other that another reduction in the wages of all employees was contemplated. At least Duncan Pritchard, who controlled so much stock that he was the ruling power in the corporation, was known to have such a plan on foot. The stockholders were to meet Wednesday afternoon and consider the matter. The mill hands were thoroughly organized, and the general impression in town was that they would resist any reduction tooth and nail. On Wednesday at 2 p. m. the stockholders gathered in the large parlor of Mr. Pritchard's sumptuous residence overlooking the bay. The president called the meeting to order. Duncan Pritchard was a big, fleshy man, with a fat face ornamented with a pair of light-hued side whiskers, always carefully brushed, while his little eyes were sunk deeply under beetling brows.

"Gentlemen," he began, in his consequential way, "I have called you together to consider a matter of vital interest to our corporation—namely, the advisability of making another and more decided cut in the wages of our employees. I find, gentlemen, that the market is suffering from an overplus of the manufactured article and that we are no longer able to obtain the prices that we ought to get for our finished product. Therefore, gentlemen, unless we are prepared to submit to a reduction of our customary six per cent. semi-annual dividend, we must cheapen the cost of production. Mr. Wells and myself have gone exhaustively into the subject, and the only effective way we see out of the difficulty is to reduce wages all along the line. You hear, gentlemen, reduce wages say, ahem! fifteen per cent. I shall now be glad to learn your views upon the subject."

The stockholders looked at one another in an undecided way, and it was a full minute before any of them made a move, then Mr. Jewett got up and said:

"Gentlemen, I am not in favor of this proposed reduction in the wages of our employees. With all due deference to the opinion of our worthy president, I think he has unconsciously exaggerated the situation. While it is true that times are not quite as prosperous with us as they were a year ago, I don't think, judging from the figures submitted to us by our manager, Mr. Wells, that a cut of fifteen per cent. in wages is necessary at this time, nor, may I say, do I think it at all advisable. Our employees have already been compelled to accept a reduction of ten per cent., and even that is a serious matter with men who have large families. I could mention several cases that have come to my notice where children have been taken from school and sent to work in the mill since the cut in question was put through. I hope, gentlemen, that you understand the gravity of this matter. Employees have rights that we ought to respect. Before we make a decided move in this thing we ought to inquire whether this proposed cut may not be a real hardship to our intelligent and faithful workers. A cut in

wages is always a serious problem, and I trust you will weigh the question well before committing yourselves to it."

While Mr. Jewett was addressing the meeting, Duncan Pritchard frowned frequently and moved uneasily in his chair. When Mr. Jewett sat down, another gentleman, a pompous bank director from the next town, arose and spoke for some time in favor of the reduction. While he was willing to admit that the working man had some rights, he thought capital had more. Finally Ogden Wells, the manager, got on his feet, and the little odds and ends of conversation which had been going on about the room were suddenly hushed, and the stockholders prepared to give undivided attention to his words.

"Gentlemen, while I do not wish you to understand that I oppose this proposed reduction of wages, I do not recommend it. I am running the mill at the present time with the smallest number of employees possible to keep up with the orders in hand, and the total amount of the payroll has been reduced to a considerable extent, while, at the same time, the hands are now watched closer and obliged to work harder. As you will understand, this has caused a good deal of discontent of late. Therefore, I consider it my duty to say that if this cut is decided upon, and I am required to enforce it, it will arouse a very determined opposition on the part of our employees. I am afraid it will bring about serious trouble. I may even lead to a general strike, for I know that our workers are well organized. I hope, gentlemen, you will think this matter over seriously before you vote for the reduction."

The manager's speech proved something of a sensation among the stockholders. While no one doubted that a reduction of wages in the mill would cause much opposition from the employees, the possibility of a strike on the part of the hands had not occurred to the minds of the prosperous gentlemen whose capital was invested in the Bayport Woolen Mills. This new phase in the situation stiffened the backs of the minority, who were opposed to the cut, and caused one or two of the other side to waver. The pompous bank director from the adjacent town, however, arose to the occasion.

He was thoroughly in sympathy with Duncan Pritchard. In fact the plan had been cooked up between the two. There was nothing in common between him and labor—organized or unorganized. He looked on the working men and women as mere cattle, and did not hesitate to express himself to that effect.

"Gentlemen," he said, holding up his coat-tails with one hand while he punctuated his speech with the other, "are we running this mill or are the hands running it? That's what I want to know. Do you propose to be dictated to by the working people? I should hope not. We have put our good money in this business, and I think, gentlemen, we have the right to carry on our business as we see it. It's a pretty how-de-do if we have got to defer to the wishes of those we employ. Somebody has got to suffer for this depression. It remains with us to say who it shall be—the mill hands, to whom, as I understand, we have been very liberal, or our-

selves. Our manager openly hints that these people will, ahem! strike if the cut is carried into effect. Well, gentlemen, suppose they do strike? Their places will be filled. There are hundreds, yes, thousands of men and women waiting for positions throughout this State who will be glad to come here at our beck. For my part, gentlemen, I would rather every loom in the mill stood idle for months than that we should be compelled to bow to the demands of the people who would have the effrontery to tell us what we shall and what we shall not do. Mr. President, I call for the question."

He sat down with the air of a man whose words could not be disputed. Duncan Pritchard immediately put the question of a reduction in the wages to a vote. It was carried by a majority of two, and the president then adjourned the meeting.

CHAPTER IV.—The Reduction in Wages.

Next day printed notices were posted up in different places throughout the big mill notifying the hands that a fifteen per cent reduction in the wages of all employees would go into effect with the beginning of the next month. Ogden Wells, the manager, when he passed through the various departments of the mill that afternoon, could not fail to notice that there was a change in the usual demeanor of the hands. The men looked sullen and determined, the girls silent and uncomfortable.

It was as if a storm was brewing in the air. Bits of paper were passed around from hand to hand. In this way every employee in the building was notified that an indignation meeting would be held that night in Washington Hall, which was the place where the regular monthly gathering of the Bayport Woolen Mill Protective Association were convened. At eight o'clock the little hall was uncomfortably crowded. It looked as if every girl, and every man and boy, employed in the Bayport mill was present. In one corner, not far from the door, Bob Chambers, Andy Ball and Jake Switzer were standing together.

"Vell," said the German boy, "vot you dinks, anyway, apoud id?"

"I think it's a blamed shame," spoke up Andy.

Bob nodded his head without speaking, thereby indicating that that was his opinion, too.

"Do ve put ub mit id, as dough ve vos many shaaps, don'd ve?"

"I should say nit," ejaculated Andy, vigorously. "Ain't that right, Bob?"

"That's right. It isn't a square deal. Every person here is going to protest against it."

At this point the president of the protective association appeared on the platform and rapped for order. The hum of conversation throughout the hall ceased at once, and all eyes were turned in his direction. He stated the object for which the meeting had been called, which, of course, everybody knew before hand, and invited the members of the association to express their sentiments on the subject. The first speaker was one of the foremen, and he didn't hesitate to say just what he thought about the announced cut. It wasn't at all complimentary to the stock-

holders of the company in general, and the manager in particular. He said he hoped all hands would resist it to the bitter end. Then others spoke, and all were for striking at once if the reduction in wages was enforced.

Many of the girls, picking up courage, had something to say on the subject, too, so that the feeling throughout the room seemed to be unanimous. The president then appointed a committee to wait upon Mr. Wells.

They were directed to request, in a polite but determined way, that the cut in wages be reconsidered, on the ground that it was manifestly unfair, and could not but entail a great deal of hardship upon the majority of the workers, most of whom had been for many years in the company's employ, and were, therefore, entitled to a fair deal. The meeting was then dismissed. On the following morning, while Ogden Wells was dictating several letters to his stenographers, one of the office clerks announced that three of the men employees wished to see him. Surprised and annoyed, he asked:

"What do they want?"

"They didn't say, sir," replied the clerk.

"I will see them presently," he answered, and went on with his dictation.

In a quarter of an hour he had finished and sent word to the outer office for the men to walk in. The committee chosen the previous evening to wait upon him, entered, and lined up in front of his desk.

"Well," he said, in his short, snappy way, "what can I do for you?"

The spokesman of the visitors cleared his throat, and said:

"We are a committee from the hands of this mill, whom we have been chosen to represent."

"What is your grievance, for I presume you have one?"

"We would ask that our wages be maintained at the present standard, as we are working now at the lowest possible rates on which we can live. It is——"

"The question has been decided by the stockholders," interrupted Manager Wells, impatiently. "I have been instructed to make the reduction as announced."

"But, sir, we think the matter ought to be reconsidered," protested the spokesman of the committee. "We are not being fairly treated."

"I have nothing whatever to do with that, my men," replied the manager, brusquely. "I cannot do otherwise than as directed."

"Do you mean to say that the cut will be enforced?"

"Undoubtedly."

The committee was taken all aback by the firm attitude of the manager. The spokesman started to say something more, but Mr. Wells cut him short.

"I think you have said that is necessary," he remarked. "I am very busy this morning, therefore——"

"Good morning, sir," replied the chairman of the committee, with a cloudy brow.

"Good morning," answered the manager, curtly.

Then the three men filed out of the private office with hope crushed out of their hearts, and sought the president of their association to report the failure of their mission.

CHAPTER V.—Bob and Ruby.

The news that the committee had been turned down in a rather brusque manner by Manager Wells was known to every hand in the mill during the dinner hour. It raised a subdued feeling of indignation among the girls, and a muttered protest from the men.

"The derved mill ought to be sot a-fire," growled Luke Sparrow, wagging his head in a significant manner.

"That would be carrying things too far," remarked one of the other packers, who didn't believe in extreme methods.

"I s'pose you wouldn't mind workin' at lower wages, eh?" exclaimed Flanders, with a threatening look at the pacifically disposed packer.

"Not on your life, Jim Flanders," replied the man, resolutely; "but I don't go in for doing up other people's property."

Before anything more could be said on the subject, the one o'clock whistle sounded, and work was resumed. The principal topic of conversation in town now became the wage issue at the woolen mill. By far the larger part of the population began to side either openly or secretly, as their interests dictated, with the hands. Duncan Pritchard and Ogden Wells suddenly became unpopular, though, of course, no one openly showed this sentiment to the two gentlemen themselves. Dexter Pritchard, however, was received with a certain degree of coolness, but he wasn't bright enough to notice the difference. While it was generally believed the mill hands would go out on strike, nothing yet had been definitely arranged by the new committee that had the matter in hand. On the following Monday Bob Chambers called for Ruby Norton at her home, one of the humblest in Bayport, and took her, as usual, to night school.

The school was dismissed at nine o'clock, and, as was their custom, they started off on a round-about way back, in order to make the walk last as long as possible. They walked slowly, and the chief topic of their conversation was the probable strike.

"I'm afraid it will go hard with you, Ruby, to be out of work, especially at this time, when your father is ill in bed."

"Yes, Bob," she answered, the big tears coming into her pretty eyes.

"It's too bad; but I'm afraid it can't be helped. The hands are determined not to work for less money than we're getting now, and it only remains for the committee to say what course will be adopted after the first of the month."

"And that is only one week away."

"That's all."

"I think the rich men who own the mill ought to be ashamed of themselves for reducing our wages a second time, and all within a year, too," said Ruby, indignantly.

"They don't look at the matter from the same standpoint we do. I have heard that the market is overstocked just now with the line of goods we turn out. This would naturally affect the price. When the profits begin to shrink, the worker is usuall the first to suffer."

"Well, it isn't fair."

"No, it isn't. The owners of this mill can much

better afford to stand a temporary loss than the hands, who have no surplus, as a rule, to fall back on."

"It is bad enough to work for a quarter less wages than we had six months ago, but think what it will be when we are out of work altogether. Oh, Bob, what will some of us do?"

"I hate to think, Ruby. It isn't so bad for me, because mother owns the cottage and Hattie makes quite a lot teaching music. In any case, if we do go out at the mill, I don't mean to hang around town with my hands in my pockets."

"Why, what will you do?"

"Tackle something else till the trouble is over."

"But you've never worked anywhere but in the mill, Bob," she cried.

"I know that, Ruby. But you don't suppose that fact would keep me from looking for another job."

"This is such a small town that it won't be easy for you to find an opening."

"Then I'll go to Millbrook or Marshfield; they're not so far away."

"Oh, Bob, I don't want you to go away," cried Ruby, impulsively.

"Don't you, little girl?" he said, with a thrill of pleasure. "Do you really want me to stay here?"

Ruby blushed furiously when she realized what she had said, and didn't answer at once. So they talked about other things until they reached the Norton cottage. They stood at the gate for another twenty minutes, and then Bob started for home.

A small flurry of rain came on before he was more than half-way home, and Bob took refuge in an old disused shed. Hardly had he done so before the sound of men's voices fell upon his ear—voices deep and angry, speaking words which riveted his attention; for he heard the name of Ogden Wells uttered threateningly and coupled with violent oaths.

Whoever the men might be, Bob had no wish to run against them. He heard them coming on, talking angrily. More than once they seemed to stop in the path and stand together, speaking in lower tones. He could only distinguish a word now and then, and generally that was an oath. Bob peered out through the heavy shower, which they didn't appear to mind any more than if they were a pair of ducks.

Suddenly they turned out of the path and made for the shed. As soon as the boy saw that, he drew into the gloom of the interior, and feeling an old barrel near one corner, he crouched down behind it.

CHAPTER VI.—A Diabolical Scheme.

Almost immediately the two men entered the shed. Their voices now sounded familiar to Bob, and, coupled with the brief and somewhat indistinct view he caught of them through the darkness and the rain outside, he thought he recognized them as Jim Flanders and Luke Sparrow, the most rabid partisans of the strike movement. A moment later all doubt as to their identity was swept away when one of them struck a match to light his pipe, and the bright glow of the

match illuminated both of their faces. They were not pleasant faces to look at, either, for they were distorted by a sullen anger at that moment.

"You're sure you've been very careful, Jim, about addressin' that box?"

"Don't you fret, Luke; leave such things to me," Flanders answered, with a hoarse chuckle. "Nobody'll ever guess who sent it."

"How did you do it?"

"I found an old envelope addressed to Wells in the yard. I cut out the name and address and pasted it on the box."

"Jim, you've got a great head," said Sparrow, admiringly.

"Im no fool, at any rate."

"There's no danger the thing will blow up in the mail-bag?"

"No. It's safe enough. I've got it so fixed it can't explode until the cover is pulled off. Wells will do that himself, after he removes the wrapper."

"And then?"

"It will be all day with him," replied Flanders, grimly. "Blame him! I'd like to be in the office when it goes off."

"So would I. He can't be laid out any too quick for me."

"Where did you mail it?"

"I didn't mail it, you fool. I met a farmer on the road to Millbrook, and I gave him the box and a dollar, told him to post it and keep the change for his trouble."

"Jim, you're about as smart as they come."

"I'm smart enough not to put my head in a noose."

"When do you s'pose that package'll arrive at the mill?"

"It'll come by the early morning mail."

"I guess we'll hear the explosion, eh?"

"We'll hear it, and no one'll be the wiser where the box came from."

"That's what I'd like to know, for it would go kind of hard with us if we happened to get ketched at such a game."

"We're not goin' to get ketched, Luke Sparrow. Nobody knows nothin' about this infernal machine but you and me. You put it together, and I wrapped it up so it looks like an ordinary package. We've both a hand in it, so neither of us can give the other away without puttin' his own hoof in it," grinned Flanders, but the grin was lost in the dark.

"If this blow-up don't settle the wage question, we'll fix another and send it to Duncan Pritchard," said Sparrow.

"That's what we will. We'll scare the duff out of them stockholders, one way or another."

The men continued to smoke away, peer out into the rain, and vent their spite in coarse language against Ogden Wells, Duncan Pritchard, and the whole bunch of the stockholders of the Bayport Woolen Mills. Bob, from his post of concealment behind the barrel, had heard every word they said after entering the shed. Gradually he began to understand the meaning of their conversation. Their murderous object became clear to him, and it made his blood run cold. They had manufactured some kind of an infernal machine, which Flanders had sent by mail to

the manager of the mill. It was due to reach Mr. Wells in the morning.

The manager was accustomed to receive all kinds of small packages, and, of course, he would open it at his desk when he went through his mail. Apparently it was constructed so as to explode when the cover was pulled off. Bob had read about similar machines, some of which had brought about appalling results to the victims, while others had been detected in time to render them harmless. It was a brutal and cowardly means of wreaking vengeance upon a marked man.

"It's right in line with the natures of such fellows as Flanders and Sparrow to get up such a villainous scheme," breathed Bob, with a thrill of indignation. "It is lucky the rain drove those chaps in here. I'll put a spoke in their wheel and save Mr. Wells from falling a victim to their design."

At that moment Bob's foot slipped and made a slight noise on the floor of the shed.

"Hist!" said Flanders. "I heard something move."

"So did I," answered Sparrow, in an uneasy tone.

They listened intently, while Bob, whose heart jumped into his throat at the thought that his presence there might be discovered, kept very quiet. A silence like that in a grave vault followed.

"I guess it was a rat," said Flanders, at length.

"Oh, mebbe, the rain," muttered Sparrow, drawing a breath of relief.

"Well, I'm goin' to make sure we're alone," went on Flanders.

He struck a match and looked carefully around the interior of the shed. Bob was well out of sight, so neither of the rascals detected him. Flanders, however, saw the empty barrel, and his suspicious nature induced him to walk over and look into it. While he was in the act the dying match burned his fingers, and he dropped it. He struck another match and peered into the barrel.

"There ain't nothin'——" he began, but just then the flare of the match, as he raised his hand, lit up the top of Bob's hat. With a terrible oath, Flanders reached down behind the barrel and grasped at the object his sharp eyes saw there. Bob realized a crisis had come, and he tried to elude the scoundrel's clutch. He was not successful, and a moment later Flanders drew him out from his place of concealment.

"Strike a match, Sparrow," roared Bob's captor. "I want to see who I've got here. It's a boy, at any rate."

A match flared up, and the two men looked at their captive.

"Bob Chambers!" both exclaimed, in a breath.

It was an unpleasant surprise to them that a mill hand had, in all probability, overheard their conversation. Not only that, but Bob had the reputation of being an honest, upright lad, who had no bad habits, attended meetings regularly on Sunday, and was well liked by every one, the few turbulent characters alone excepted, from the manager down. He was the last person in town Flanders and Sparrow would have wanted to get an inkling of their dastardly plot.

"What are you doing in here at this time of the

night?" demanded the chief ruffian, holding the boy firmly by the collar of his jacket.

"I came in to get out of the rain."

"You were here when we came, then?"

"Yes."

"Why were you hidin' behind that barrel?"

Bob made no reply to this question.

"Are you goin' to answer me?"

"I don't know that it's any of your business," said Bob, defiantly.

"It is our business," snarled Flanders, giving him a rough shake.

"What difference can it make to you if I was resting myself until the weather cleared up?"

It was an ingenuous excuse, but it didn't satisfy the suspicions of the men.

"It makes a heap of difference," gritted Flanders.

"If you don't want me here I'll go," replied Bob. "It's stopped raining."

"I dare say you'd like to go, but you're not goin' any the more for that," said the burly villain, with a somewhat brutal laugh. "Anyway, not yet. We didn't expect the pleasure of your company, you know," with some sarcasm, "but now you're here you've got to stop till we say you kin go."

The boy's answer to this was a sudden jerk, squirming out of Flanders' grasp, and rushing to the door of the shed. Sparrow, however, reached for and caught him in the dark, so the effort to free himself was a failure on Bob's part.

"You're mighty spry, my lad, but not quite spry enough," chuckled Flanders, once more securing a grip on the boy.

"What do you want with me, anyway?" demanded Bob, a bit uneasily, though he had a pretty clear idea what was in the wind.

"We want to know if you've been listenin' to what we was talkin' about since we came in here."

Bob might easily have denied that he had overheard a word, and no doubt most boys would have done so under the circumstances, but our hero scorned to tell a direct lie, and the only thing he could do was to take refuge in silence.

"Did you hear what we said after we came in here?" repeated Flanders, in a threatening tone.

"I heard a great deal," admitted the boy, desperately.

"About that box, eh?" hissed the rascal.

"Yes."

"You hear that, Sparrow?"

"I hear," snarled his companion, in a shaky tone.

"Look here," snarled Flanders, in a voice of suppressed fury, "why didn't you go when you found we were talkin' about matters that didn't concern you?"

Not knowing what reply to make to this, Bob said nothing.

"Why didn't you go?"

"I didn't care to have you know I was here," answered Bob, doggedly.

"You didn't, eh? If we hadn't ketched you a-listenin' behind that barrel you'd waited till we went off and then you'd gone and blowed the whole thing. Ain't that what you mean to do?"

Bob didn't answer.

"You contankerous imp!" cried Flanders, pas-

sionately. "If you don't open your jaw I'll choke the truth out of you," and the fellow gripped Bob by the throat. "Tell me now what you meant to do if we had not caught you before we left the shed?"

"I meant to try and stop you from carrying out your plan to kill Mr. Wells with that infernal machine you have mailed to him," said the boy, boldly.

"You meant to do that, eh?" asked the villain, and his voice was harder and his manner harsher than before.

"Yes, I did. I meant to try and save you from the commission of a crime," said Bob, speaking confidently and bravely.

"Ho!" answered Flanders, with a sneer. "That's very good of you, you cantin' little hypocrite! Havin' accidentally overheard us, you wanted to turn the information to our moral good. I s'pose you didn't figger it would send us to jail, did you?"

Bob was silent.

"S'posin' we let you go, what'll you do?"

"What will I do?"

"Yes."

"I shall try to save Mr. Wells."

"You will?"

"I will."

"You'll tell all you know and have us two juggled?"

"No. I'm willing to give you a chance," said Bob, eagerly.

"How?"

"I'll warn him against the package, but I won't say anything about you or Luke Sparrow."

"You're very kind," replied Flanders, in jeering tones. "And you think we are green enough to trust you, eh? At any rate, you mean to balk our scheme if you get the chance. What shall we do to him, Sparrow?"

"I dunno," replied the other rascal, in some trepidation.

"Well, I know. He's got to be silenced, do you understand?"

"How are you goin' to do it?"

"How?" and Flanders uttered an unpleasant laugh. "I'm not goin' to State's prison to save a little psalm-singin' monkey like this chap from a squeeze on the throat or a knock on the head."

"You don't mean to murder him?" gasped Sparrow, in a tone of protest.

"What would you do? Let him go so he could blab on us?" sneered the other.

"No. We can't let him go. We could take him somewhere and keep him out of sight."

"Where would you say to take him?" snarled his companion.

Sparrow scratched his head in a perplexed way and was silent.

"You're mighty ready with your suggestions, Luke Sparrow, but what do they amount to? S'posin' we hide him away somewheres, we'd have to feed him to keep him alive, wouldn't we? If we forgot to do it, or somethin' prevented us doin' it, he'd die, wouldn't he? It will save a lot of trouble and thinkin' if he's made to slip his wind first instead of last."

"I don't like the idea of—" began Sparrow, slowly.

"Well, you've got to like it. You're in this

thing with me, sink or swim, and you're goin' to do your share, or, by Christopher! I'll make you wish you'd never been born!" cried Flanders, furiously.

"What do you want me to do?" asked Sparrow, evidently cowed.

"I want you to help me carry this chap to the cut."

"To the cut? What for?" asked Luke, in surprise.

"You'll see when you get there. Just wait a moment till I fasten somethin' 'round his jaw," and he proceeded to gag Bob with a dirty red handkerchief. "That'll do. Now grab his legs and follow me."

CHAPTER VII.—In the Railroad Cut.

The cut to which Jim Flanders referred was the railroad cut about half a mile from the shed, just outside the town limits. Four tracks of the Eastern Railroad spanned the narrow break in a long, low hill, running northward to Millbrook and southward to Marshfield, the nearest stopping places either side of Bayport. The cut was a lonesome spot at all hours, but particularly so at night.

Just why Flanders proposed to carry Bob Chambers to that locality was not exactly clear to the somewhat dull comprehension of Luke Sparrow; but he was afraid to inquire into the matter in his companion's present frame of mind. So the two men trudged along in silence, bearing their burden between them. The rain had ceased some time back, the clouds were breaking away, and the rest of the night promised to be clear. There was a couple of switches near the entrance to the cut and a switchman's shanty. As they approached the place they saw a dull gleam of light shining from the solitary window of the hut, which showed that the night switchman was on duty, as he should be. The red light of one switch and the white light of the other faced them as they tramped slowly along.

Finally Flanders, who was leading the way, came to a halt a short distance from the entrance to the cut, and motioned to his companion to drop the boy. They laid Bob down on the damp ground, and Flanders put his foot upon his chest to keep him there.

"There'll be a freight train along here soon," said the chief rascal, in a low tone.

"What of it?" asked his companion-in-guilt.

Flanders gave utterance to a hoarse chuckle, which seemed to come from his boots, and then said:

"It'll save us the trouble of knockin' this chap on the skull, or chokin' the breath out of him."

"How will it?"

"Look here, Sparrow, you seem to be thicker than the mud out in the harbor. We've got to get rid of this boy, hain't we? Well, what's an easier way than to lay him on the track down the cut yonder, just before the freight comes along? The engine and long train'll chaw him into little bits. That'll rid us of him for good and all. No fear, then, of any information about that box gettin' out of him."

Bob, where he lay on the ground, heard every

word of this horrible suggestion, and its import sent a cold chill to his heart.

"Ain't there no other way?" asked Sparrow, who didn't seem to have any heart in the cold-blooded disposal of the boy, although he did not feel the least remorse about sending Manager Wells, of the mill, to his death in an equally terrible way.

"No, there ain't," snarled Flanders, impatiently. "He's got to die, and that's all there is to it. It's his own fault for buttin' in where he wasn't wanted."

"I ain't got nothin' ag'in the boy, except he knows too much," said Sparrow.

"Ain't that enough?"

"It'll be a hangin' matter, if it's traced to us."

"How'll it be traced to us? No one has seen us fetchin' him along so far, and there's no one 'round here to see us carry him up the track, except the switchman, and he's toastin' his toes by the stove in his shanty."

"Well, I hate to do it," answered Luke, reluctantly.

"Do you know what it would mean if we let him go so he could give the snap ag'in Wells away? It would mean a twenty-year spell for you and me at the State prison. How does that strike you, eh?" said Flanders, grimly.

"Twenty years is a long time," answered Luke, waveringly.

"You kin bet it is. I knowed a man once who'd been through that mill, and he said it's wuss than bein' hanged."

"But the boy promised not to give us away."

"You believe that, do you?" sneered Flanders.

"He'll agree to that to save his life. I know I would if I was in his shoes."

"I don't mean to take no such chance. I wouldn't trust no boy livin'. He's got to turn up his toes, I tell you, and there ain't the least of you arguin' ag'in it, Luke Sparrow. There's the whistle of the freight now. It goes up on this here track. We've got to sneak into the cut before the switchman pokes his nose outside, which he'll do in about three shakes of a lamb's tail. That whistle may be a signal to him, for all we know otherwise."

Flanders reached down and grabbed Bob by the shoulders, while Sparrow got hold of him once more by the legs, and in that shape they filed into the cut, and were immediately lost in the gloom of the pass. As they walked forward, the heavy panting of the freight engine in their rear reached their ears, as, at reduced speed, it came rumbling along through the suburbs of Bayport, where the yard rule had to be observed by the engineers. About half-way through the cut there was a break in the hillside, where some rude wooden stairs had been set up for the accommodation of railroad men who lived on the hill beyond.

There was a sign at the top of the steps marked "Danger," which warned the casual pedestrian against using the stairs. This was the spot selected by Flanders, who was well acquainted with the locality, for carrying out his fearful purpose.

"Drop him!" he cried to Sparrow.

Luke let go of Bob's legs, but Flanders held the boy upright

"I s'pose you understand what you're up ag'in, you tarnation young monkey?" said the rascal, addressing the boy he gripped tightly by the arms to prevent him from getting away. "You've got just about two minits to live, and then you'll be under the wheels of that there freight you kin hear comin' this way. As I ain't spiteful enough to make you suffer any more'n necessary to put a stop to that tongue of yours, I'm goin' to fix you so you won't never know you've been chewed up by that train."

Bob had been thinking very hard from the moment he realized the fate in store for him. He was now in a state of utter desperation, and though he appeared to be passive, he was mustering his strength for one final attempt to save himself. He felt the crucial moment had now arrived. Putting every ounce of his energy into the effort, he tore himself free, struck Flanders a staggering blow in the face, and turned to flee. The attempt would probably have been successful, for Flanders had been wholly taken by surprise, and the blow, no light one, had momentarily dazed him, while Luke Sparrow was not in a position to hinder the boy's escape, but for the unfortunate fact that Bob's ankle turned under him, and he fell between the tracks. He staggered to his feet and fell again.

Before he could rise a second time, Flanders jumped on him like a tiger. A desperate struggle ensued, in the midst of which came the prolonged whistle of the freight as it approached the entrance to the cut. Chug-chug! Chug-chug! came the parting engine, as if complaining about the heavy, rumbling load it was pulling along over the rails.

"Blast you!" cried Flanders, as the glare of the headlight began to glisten along the rails.

He struck fiercely at Bob, and the blow, though only a glancing one on the head, dazed the boy, and he fell back nerveless at the man's mercy. Believing he had thoroughly stunned Bob, which was his original intention, Flanders threw him half across the rail, in such a position that the train would cut the lad in two. Then he sprang away, seized the conscience-stricken Sparrow by the arm, and dragged him toward the wooden stairs.

"Quick! Up with you!" he cried, fiercely, "or we shall be seen."

Luke allowed himself to be hustled up the steps, and the two villains reached the top of the hill as the freight, with gradually increasing speed, came rolling along through the cut. They paused a dozen yards away. Although they could no longer see the train, they could tell by the sound that it was passing the spot where Bob Chambers lay stretched across the track.

CHAPTER VIII.—A Close Call.

At that moment there came to the ears of the two scoundrels the sound of approaching voices from in front. Two boys, who for some reason or other were out late, were coming toward the cut. One of them at least appeared to be un-

ANDY THE MILL BOY

usually happy, for he was singing after a hilarious fashion a popular air:

"I'm der kid dot's all der candy,
I'm a Yankee Dootle Danty,
I'm gled I am,
So's Uncle Sam;
I'm a real life Yankee Dootle,
Made mine name, und fame, und bootle,
Yust like Misder Dootle dit,
Riding by der pony on——"

"Oh, come off, Jake!" interrupted the voice of Andy Ball, "you can't sing worth a sour potato." "Py shimmany Ghristmas! Der madder mit you is dot some ears for moosic you don'd got, I ped you."

"Do you call that yawp you were gettin' off singin'?"

"Yah. Why nod?"

"If it isn't the worst ever I'm a liar," cried Andy, in a disgusted tone.

"Den oxcoose me off I say you peen a liar twice dimes over."

"Don't call me a liar, you bunch of misery, or there'll be somethin' doin'."

"Is dot so-o-o? Vell, I ped you off I hid you vunce und you don'd fall down I'll look und see vot you vos tied to."

"Well, if I hit you once somebody will have to take you to the hospital."

"I dink you vos dalking py your hat drough."

"I've a great mind to give you a biff on the solar plexus."

"I wouldn't did dot off I vos you. You vill seen your mistake pretty soon already yet."

They were now abreast of Flanders and Sparrow, who shrank away into the gloom.

"You make me sick!" growled Andy.

"Is dot so-o-o? O: I vos you den I would seen der doctor so soon as now."

"If you don't look where you're goin' you'll need a doctor to sew you together. What are you tryin' to do—fall into the cut?"

Switzer had very nearly made a misstep which would have sent him head foremost down onto the rails below. Andy reached out and yanked him back just in time.

"Py shimmany Ghristmas! Dot vos a glose cell, I ped you."

"Well, don't do it again. There's the stairs in front of you."

"Vell," said Jake, sagely, "some beoble don't know so much pefore some dings habbens as dey knew afterwards, ain't id?"

They went down the steps, and started across the tracks, when Jake tripped over something yielding in his path.

"Py shinsher!" he exclaimed, as he picked himself up. "I pelief I haf cracked mine yaw."

"Serves you right!" grumbled Andy, who was in a hurry to get home. "Why don't you look where you're goin', and not tangle your feet up with the track?"

"I ped you dot don't peen no tracks dot dook from under me mine feets."

"Oh, rates! Come on!" retored Andy, impatiently.

"Yust waits a ilddle. I haf some curiosity to seen vot dot dings vos."

Jake stooped down and took a close look at the obstruction.

"Py Shorge! Id's sompody py der tracks upon. Off he stays py dis blaces he vill pe pretty soon alretty yet kilt, I ped you. Here, Andy, hellup me took him py der danger oud."

"Who is he? Some drunken tramp?" asked Andy, returning to lend his assistance.

"Nein. He vos a poy."

"What's the matter with him? Got a fit?"

"Vell, dere vos somedings der madder mid him."

While Jake lifted the unfortunate to a sitting posture, Andy struck a match.

"Bob Chambers!" cried Andy, dropping the match in his astonishment.

"Shimmany Ghristmas! Vot peen he doing oud here?" gasped Jake.

"I say, Bob," said Andy, anxiously shaking his friend by the arm, "what does this mean?"

Bob was fast coming to himself, and in another moment he looked at the indistinct forms of his two friends.

"Is that you, Andy?" he asked.

"Sure! And here's Jake. If he hadn't tumbled over you we never would have known you were here. What's the trouble, old chap?"

Bob got on his feet, looked around and shuddered.

"I've just had a narrow squeal for my life," he said.

"How is that?" inquired Andy, curiously.

"Yah," chipped in Switzer, "how dot come apoud?"

"I was brought out here to be made into mincemeat by that freight train which just passed."

"What!" gasped Andy, while a similar ejaculation gurgled down in Jake's throat.

"That's right," asserted Bob, with a shiver. "If it hadn't been that the villains placed me on the wrong track I should have been a mangled corpse by this time."

"Who done dot wickedness?" asked Jake.

"You will hardly believe me when I tell you."

"Well, let us hear, if you know," said Andy.

"Two of the mill hands—Jim Flanders and Luke Sparrow."

"You don't mean it!" gasped Andy, astonished.

"Shim Flanders und Luke Sbarrow! Vell, I always dought dey peen pretty ped eggs. For vhy did dey done dis ding to you?"

"Because they caught me listening to a plot they had hatched against Ogden Wells."

"So. Vot were dey going to done to him?"

"Blow him to pieces with an infernal machine they have sent him through the mail."

"Oh, come off, Bob! You're drawin' it pretty strong, ain't you?" said Andy, incredulously.

"You wouldn't think so if you had heard those two chaps going over the thing as I did. They were in earnest, all right. If it wasn't the real goods they wouldn't have tried to murder me for getting on to them."

"Tell us all about it, Bob," said Andy, as the three boys walked out of the cut and started up the first street at hand.

Bob at once told them the complete story of his night's adventures.

"Well, you did have a close call, for a fact," commented Andy.

"I ped you," chimed in Jake.

"Altogether too close to be pleasant," replied Bob.

"What are you going to do about it? You'll have Flanders and Sparrow pulled in right away, of course?"

"I rather guess I will. I shan't do anything till morning. That'll be time enough. It will be an unexpected surprise for them, as they think I am done for, no doubt."

"How about that box in the mail?"

"I'll see Mr. Wells first thing in the morning and warn him about it."

"Those fellows will go up for a good spell for their villainy."

"There isn't any doubt about it. They can easily be convicted on either charge. They'll get from fifteen to twenty years, I should think."

"Serve 'em right. They've been makin' a lot of trouble for the society, one way or another. Frank Dungan, one of the packers, said they were talkin' of settin' the mill afire to bring the stockholders to reason. What do you think of that?"

"I think it'll be a good thing to get them out of the way."

The boys parted at the next corner, each going his own way.

CHAPTER IX.—The Infernal Machine.

As Bob sometimes stayed out late at the club, nothing was thought of his getting home after midnight on this particular occasion. He got up at his usual hour next morning, ate his breakfast and started for the mill, where he had to report promptly at seven o'clock. On his way he stopped at the residence of Ogden Wells, but found that the manager had left town the previous afternoon and was not expected back till eleven o'clock that morning.

"I haven't time to go to the police now on my own hook," he mused, as he walked rapidly along toward the mill. I'll have to let the matter rest till I see Mr. Wells. He'll be at the office at eleven. I'll be on the lookout for him."

Bob kept a wary eye out for Flanders and Sparrow, as he didn't want them to see him, but it happened neither of the rascals showed up for work that morning. The fact of the matter was, both had got intoxicated after their return from the railroad cut to the former's lodgings, and were now sleeping off the effects. The early mail arrived at the mill about half-past eight. At nine o'clock Bob managed to get out of the operating room, where he was employed, and went downstairs to the general office.

He went up to the office boy, whose duty it was to bring the mail from the post-office, and asked him if there was a box, or package which might contain a box, in Mr. Wells' mail. The boy was surprised at the question, but told him there was nothing of the kind among the pile of letters and newspapers he had laid on the manager's desk.

"When do you go for the next mail, Eddie?"

"Eleven o'clock."

Bob returned to his work, keeping a frequent eye on the clock. It wanted a minute to eleven when the foreman called the boy and told him

to go down to the engine-room, which was a single story annex to the mill itself, and fetch a certain tool he wanted. Bob hustled to obey this order. As he passed around on the outside of the building he looked in at the window of the manager's desk. Mr. Wells was at his desk.

"I haven't any time to lose," breathed Bob, hurrying on to the engine-room.

The tool he came for was not found at once, and he had to wait about until the engineer got ready to look it up. This caused a delay of more than fifteen minutes, and the boy stood around in a fever of impatience until the implement was finally put in his hands.

Then he started back as fast as he could go. As he repassed the private office window he glanced in again. The manager was holding an oblong package in his two hands, apparently looking at the address on it.

"Great Scott!" breathed Bob, excitedly. "Suppose that should happen to be the box sent by Jim Flanders? I must warn him without a moment's delay."

He would have rapped on the window, but he couldn't approach it on account of several cases which stood in the way. So he did the only thing that occurred to him. He rushed for the door of the outer office. Ogden Wells was generally at his desk at nine o'clock in the morning. This particular day was an exception. He had gone up to Boston on the previous afternoon to make a provisional arrangement with a well-known agency to supply him with hands in the event that the mill employees went on strike on the first of the month.

Judging from the temper of the old hands, as well as from information of what had taken place at their last meeting, which was secretly obtained for him, he believed a strike was imminent. So he took time by the forelock, in order to be prepared for any emergency. The train from Boston reached Bayport at 10.45, and Mr. Wells was at his desk a couple of minutes before eleven. He found the mail, as usual, piled upon his desk. He put the papers aside and read the letters, making notes for replies. Then he called his stenographer and dictated half a dozen brief answers.

While thus engaged, Eddie, the office boy, brought in the second mail. This consisted of three letters, a paper and an oblong package—the latter strongly and carefully wrapped and corded. After going through the letters, Mr. Wells took up the package and looked at it. The address itself was written on heavy envelope paper and pasted on the package wrapper and part of an old postmark appeared at one corner. Underneath the address was written in a heavy hand, diagonally across the face of the package, the word "Samples."

Mr. Wells turned it over once or twice in his hands and then looked for his shears. They were not where he usually kept them, but after a few moments' delay he discovered them in his letter-basket tray on top of his desk. The manager was about to cut the cords which secured the wrapper, when the door of the office was suddenly dashed open and Bob Chambers rushed in.

"Stop, for heaven's sake!" he cried, earnestly. "That package contains an infernal machine!"

The boy's whirlwind entrance, and his startling

words, produced a sensation in the private office. Ogden Wells, the shears poised in one hand, the package in the other, looked at the young intruder in surprise. The head bookkeeper, who had entered the room a few minutes before for some document he required, turned around and eyed Bob, with a look of consternation in his face; while the pretty stenographer, who was on the way to the manager's desk with some typewritten letters in her hand, stopped short and gave a little shriek of terror. But Bob didn't stop until he reached Mr. Wells' side, and then pointing at the unopened package in the manager's hand, said:

"Don't open that! It's dangerous, sir. There's some kind of apparatus in it which is arranged to explode and kill you the moment you take off the cover."

Ogden Wells was not a coward. He looked calmly at the boy's flushed and excited face, and then said:

"How do you know?"

"I'll tell you the whole story if you'll let me, sir."

"Certainly. Bring up a chair and I will listen to you."

He put down the package as he spoke and waited for Bob's explanation.

"Do not be alarmed, Miss Sutton," he added, turning to his stenographer, whose frightened countenance at that moment attracted his notice. "You may hand me those letters."

The girl gave him the sheets she had in her hand, and then returned to her desk, but she was clearly incapable of going on with her work for the present. Bob took his seat by the manager's side and detailed to him what he had overheard in the deserted shed the night before; how Flanders caught him hiding behind the barrel, and what he and his companion, Luke Sparrow, had afterward done to him for the purpose of closing his mouth forever.

"I was discovered on the track by Andy Ball and Jake Switzer, and they are ready to testify to that fact."

Ogden Wells heard the boy through without interrupting him. Then he questioned Bob on several points not quite clear to him.

Without making any comment on the story he drew his office telephone, which connected him with the various departments of the mill, toward him, and putting the stopper in a certain hole, placed the receiver to his ear. He had placed himself in communication with the packing department.

"Are Flanders and Sparrow at work this morning?" he asked, in reply to a distant, "Well, sir?"

"No, sir. They've never been both away at the same time before."

"That is all," replied the manager, who then connected with another department.

"Is Switzer on your floor?"

"Yes, sir."

"Send him to the office, please."

A similar message was sent to the shuttle-room for Andy. Both of the boys appeared together, and were admitted to the private office at once. They corroborated Bob's statement that they had found him in a semi-unconscious condition on one of the tracks of the Eastern Railroad in the cut outside the town limits.

Manager Wells dismissed Andy and Jake with the caution not to open their mouths on the subject. Then he telephoned for an officer of the police. One of the Bayport force soon appeared.

"I have reason to believe that this package contains some kind of a bomb or infernal machine. As it came through the mail, I don't think there is any danger of it exploding through mere handling in its present shape; but to be on the safe side I would advise you to carry it carefully. Take it to the station and soak it well. I will follow you presently to consult with the captain about it."

The policeman didn't relish the job; but it was in his line of his duty, and he couldn't well refuse to accept the dangerous package. He carried it gingerly out of the building, to the immense relief of the stenographer especially, who hadn't been easy in her mind from the moment Bob entered the room and made his sensational announcement.

"Now, Chambers," said Manager Wells, "take off your working rig; I want you to go with me to the police station."

He had already thanked and complimented the boy for the part he had played in the affair, and promised to see that he was rewarded. Bob protested that he didn't want any reward, as he believed he had only done his duty; but the manager assured him that the awful risk he had faced in connection with the matter entitled him to something more substantial than an ordinary vote of thanks, and he would see that he got it. At the police station, Bob told his story over again to the captain of the force, who immediately issued an order for the arrest of Jim Flanders and Luke Sparrow, and officers were sent out to find the two rascals.

After the package had been soaked for an hour in a pail of water, the wrapper was carefully removed and the contents found to be a wooden box six inches long, two inches wide and an inch deep. This was replaced in the pail and soaked a considerable time longer. The box had a sliding cover, but instead of opening it in the regular way, the cover was pried off, when the true character of the package was revealed.

There were two parlor match set heads downward in the sliding cover of the box, so that when the cover was withdrawn the heads of the matches would ignite by striking on slips of emery paper in the bottom. Packed in brownish cotton in the box was a small cylinder of cardboard containing gunpowder, plugged at the ends with cotton.

In one end of the box were two 32-caliber revolver cartridges, with notches filed in the rims of the shells in such a manner as to expose the powder. There were also several slugs of lead, irregular in shape, loose in the box.

"Well," remarked Ogden Wells, when he was called to examine the contents of the box, "that is a most ingenious bomb. It wouldn't have done a thing to me if it had exploded in my hands."

"That's right," replied the police captain, "it would have laid you out for keeps. You owe your life to that boy."

And Mr. Wells agreed with him.

Ogden Wells called on Duncan Pritchard at

his home and told him the story of the infernal machine. He also suggested that Bob Chambers ought to be rewarded for the part he had played in the affair. Mr. Pritchard agreed with him and ordered the treasurer to draw up a check for \$1,000, and it was handed to the boy that afternoon. Bob's mother and sister were greatly delighted when they learned from Bob what had occurred and the reward he had received.

Bob was hailed as a hero by the mill hands next day. But this did not alter the determination of the employees to strike if the new wage scale went into existence. The officers of the mill were determined that the wage cut should go into effect, and the employees were as determined they would not submit. Of course Dexter Pritchard was delighted with the aspect of affairs, as it would put Ruby Norton out of a job.

CHAPTER X.—The Strike.

Long before seven o'clock on Monday morning small groups of the strikers began to gather in the immediate vicinity of the mill. At half-past six, when the smoke usually began to pour out of the tall chimney there wasn't even a wisp of vapor to be seen.

Ogden Wells was walking smartly down the street toward the mill. By this time there were more than sixty of the old employees near the gate. The manager paid no attention to them, but entered the yard after exchanging a word with the timekeeper. At half-past seven he left the office entrance and started toward the railroad station.

The 7.45 train from Boston brought about fifty men and girls from Boston who had been sent to take the places of the strikers. Manager Wells and two policemen met them and piloted them to the mill. Their appearance was greeted by a chorus of hoots and groans from the strikers now augmented to more than a hundred, who had formed a lane from the gate to the street corner, and through which the newcomers had to pass.

The majority of the old hands contented themselves with viewing the strike-breakers with solemn displeasure, making no effort to prevent them from entering the mill yard. Whether they were deterred by the presence of Ogden Wells, whose face wore a resolute look, or the two policemen, or because their leaders had instructed them not to make a disturbance, certain it is they made no demonstration beyond the few hoots and groans here and there. As the last new hand passed inside, Andy yelled out:

"Three groans for Ogden Wells;"

The crowd right around him took the cue and groaned lustily, and the sound rolled right along down the two lines. At this moment Bob Chambers and Ruby Norton came walking slowly down the street. They did not mingle with the others, but stood on the other side of the way and watched the proceedings with much interest. As the mob broke up into groups again, Jake and Andy saw Bob and Ruby, and joined them.

"Did you seen 'em?—dose new handts?" asked Switzer.

"No," replied Bob

"Dey don't last, I ped you."

"Are we going to let these newcomers keep our jobs from us? Well, I guess not!" and Andy looked as if he was just ready for a scrap.

"There's a big committee appointed to look after that," said Bob. "We can't win by raising a rumpus."

"They've no business comin' here when they know there's a strike on," persisted Andy.

"What's the use kicking? You'll always find lots to do that in every trade."

"Then they ought to be treated as they deserve, that's what I say."

"Vot you dinks apoud id, Miss Ruby?" asked Jake.

"I think it's a shame that the company cut our wages, and made us go out in self-defense," she replied, spiritedly.

"Py shinsher! You vomens ought to got ub a processions, und valk py der bresident's house, und spoke to him yust somedings like dot. Maype some imbressions id vould make on him, ain'd it?"

"I'm afraid not," said Bob. "Duncan Pritchard isn't the kind of man that's easily moved from his purpose. I understand he's at the bottom of the reduction. If so, the women and girls would only be wasting their breath on him."

Another chorus of hootings from the workers attracted their attention. This was occasioned by the appearance of a dozen women and girls who had come over from Marshfield in a wagon. The strikers blocked the way of the vehicle and the occupants began to grow frightened, though no actual violence was intended. They were beset on all sides by requests from the old hands to go back.

The driver tried to urge his horses forward, but could make no headway through the crowd. Some threats were uttered, and several sticks were waved in the air by way of intimidation, then two strikers began to push the animals around. At this point Ogden Wells and one of the officers appeared at the gate and came to the rescue.

They were greeted by hoots and catcalls, but that was the extent of the interference. After much trouble the wagon was driven into the yard. When it came out again empty, the driver was pelted by the many urchins about, with sticks and clods of earth. The 9.50 Boston train brought in another lot of girls and a few men from the city, and a larger crowd of strikers being persent, half a dozen policemen were called on to escort them to the mill. They were received with many manifestations of anger and hostility by the ol dhands, but there was no actual collision.

"What do you want to come here and take honest folks' work for?" shouted the angry wife of one of the foremen.

"Aye, aye, aye!" echoed along the line.

"Stand back, there!" commanded the two officers in the lead.

"Vouldn't dose bolicemans make you sick?" said Jake, in a tone of disgust.

The crowd now seemed on the point of losing its temper, for it surged about, excitedly.

"Down with the scabs!" cried a stentorian voice.

A great uproar ensued, in the midst of which half a dozen men, in the form of a football flying wedge, pushed through the crowd, scattering strikers and newcomers right and left, and throwing the whole street into a scene of confusion. The air was filled with shrieks, hoots and derisive laughter. Manager Wells and the officers were mixed up and detached from the new hands and for a few moments a scene of pandemonium ensued.

When order was finally somewhat restored, more than half of the fresh arrivals had disappeared, and no one seemed to know where they had vanished to. When the strikers realized this there was a great burst of cheering. It was the first victory.

CHAPTER XI.—Dexter Pritchard Gets Ugly.

The police now got busy in earnest, and drove the crowd of strikers away from the immediate neighborhood of the gate. They were hooted and jeered at, and given as much trouble as possible, but no one ventured to resist them openly. The smoke now began to pour out of the big chimney. An engineer and fireman had been secured.

Just then a light buggy drove up to the office entrance of the mill. In it were Duncan Pritchard and his son Dexter. They were received with a howl of derision. The elder Pritchard got out and entered the office, and then Dexter turned the horse around and started off up the street. At the moment Ruby was crossing the road to speak to one of her friends. Dexter saw her, and whipping up his spirited animal, deliberately ran her down. At least that seemed to be his intention. The three boys—Bob, Andy and Jake—happened to be looking at him at the time. Andy and Jake threw up their hands and shouted to Ruby to look out. Bob, however, with a cry of anger, rushed for the horse's head. Ruby saw the animal almost upon her, and stood right where she was, paralyzed with fear. Bob reached the spot not a moment too soon, and grasped the mare's bridle.

"Let that horse alone!" roared Dexter, furiously.

"What's the matter with you?" cried Bob. "Do you want to run over her?"

"Get out of my way, you beggar!" exclaimed the young aristocrat, snapping the whiplash about Bob's ears.

The young mill hand caught the lash with one hand and jerked the whip out of Dexter's hand.

"Give me my whip, you villain!" sputtered Dexter Pritchard, in a rage.

"Py shinsher! I would gif you dot vhip in a vay you wouldn't like off I had id, I ped you!" shouted Jake, shaking his fist at the magnate's son.

Dexter, mad with anger, lashed his horse with the reins. She reared up and tore herself free from Bob's hold, swerved to one side and dashed forward, just clearing the brave boy by a bare inch. Ruby, with a little cry, fainted dead away in Bob's arms.

"Py Shorge!" cried Jake. "Dit you efer seen anydings like dot?"

"He ought to be kicked from here to the bay," said Andy, angrily.

"Vell, off I vos Bob Shambers I know vot I would done to him when I seen dot snoozer again, I ped you. I would leaf der mab of Yarmany by his face ubon."

Bob carried Ruby to the sidewalk, where several of her girl friends took charge of her.

"What the dickens did Dexter Pritchard mean?" asked the boy, in some excitement. "He might have killed or injured us both the way he acted. His father ought to be told of this. I won't stand for anything like that from anybody."

"Von would dink he had took leaf off his senses."

"I'm going to have an explanation or I'll know the reason why," said Bob, resolutely.

"Dot's righd; but off you vos me I would like him fe-erst und eggspanations took after dot."

"I'll take this whip into the office and see Mr. Pritchard about the matter," and Bob, after seeing that Ruby had recovered, started to carry out his intention.

But the incident didn't stop there. The affair had attracted the attention of many of the strikers, and they gathered around and wanted to know all about it. Switzer and Andy Ball made no bones about what Dexter had done, in fact, they represented the matter in its worst light. Their story roused their listeners to a fever pitch of indignation, and Ruby's white face added to their anger.

One of the agitators in the crowd seized the chance to address the strikers in a revolutionary way, and he didn't have much trouble to arouse bad blood. He handled the Pritchards without gloves, denounced the upper class generally, and did not forget to drag in Ogden Wells for a share of his venom. There is little doubt but an incipient riot would have ensued if it hadn't been for the quick action of several of the leaders present, who, scenting trouble, hastened to address the crowd, begging their followers to be calm and not allow themselves to be led into any act they would afterward regret.

This sensible course had the desired effect, and the mob cooled down. Another batch of outsiders were brought to the mill during the afternoon, but they were not molested, though the strikers appealed to them not to go to the mill, without success. The police maintained the utmost vigilance about the mill property, and kept the disgruntled old hands at a respectable distance. Nearly all the girls and women left the neighborhood early, while the men remained to canvass the situation, and patronize the nearest saloon.

By five o'clock most of the crowd had dwindled away to the regular pickets, and the members of the committee who had the strike in charge. They waited patiently about for the mill to shut down and the newcomers to come out, intending then to argue the matter with them. This plan was frustrated by Ogden Wells, who had secured a big building near by and turned it into a temporary boarding and lodging house.

When the new force knocked off, they were mustered in the yard and marched in a body, under police protection, to the building. After they had entered, two policemen were left to stand

guard at the door, and the strike committee, seeing the futility of further interference, withdrew with the pickets until morning. In the meantime, Bob Chambers obtained an interview with Duncan Pritchard, and called his attention to the singular conduct of his son. The magnate was rather annoyed at the incident, but naturally was inclined to gloss over Dexter's behavior.

"Ahem! young man, I think you are making a mountain out of a molehill," said Mr. Pritchard, loftily. "Why should my son try to run over Miss Norton, or, in fact, any one else? Why, the idea is ridiculous. The horse is a spirited one, and must have become frightened and somewhat unmanageable by the crowd in the street."

"There was no crowd in the street at that point. Ruby was crossing——"

"Yes, I know," interrupted the president of the company, impatiently; "but it is really preposterous to suppose that Dexter would deliberately try to do either of you an injury."

"Then, sir, you discredit my statement?" replied the boy, indignantly.

"I certainly believe you are mistaken in the matter. By the way, I think you are the boy who warned Mr. Wells about that infernal machine, are you not?"

"I am, sir."

"You received \$1,000 from the company, did you not?"

"I received a check for that amount."

"Then let me say, young man, you have shown very poor taste—very poor taste, I repeat—by deserting the company with the rest of the men. Common gratitude should have suggested to you the propriety of sticking to those who so munificently—I believe that is the proper word—rewarded you. That is all, young man. You may go."

The manager was present and heard the entire interview. He nodded pleasantly to Bob when the boy was leaving the room, and Bob politely acknowledged his salutation.

"It is clear I haven't gained much by appealing to Mr. Duncan Pritchard," said the lad to himself. "I might have guessed he would have stood up for his son. I'll have to settle this case with Dexter myself."

"Vell, Boppy," asked Jake, when Bob rejoined his friends, "vot dit you done?"

"Not much," replied the boy, in a dissatisfied tone.

"Didn't I toldt you so, Andy? Vot would you oxford from a big pud a grunt."

"Where's Ruby?" asked Bob, looking around.

"She went home with three of the girls, a while ago," answered Andy. "She's all broke up."

"Well, it's a shame. Dexter Pritchard shall answer for this."

"Off you vos me I wouldn't took no nonsense apoud id. I would stood py his neck on pretty soon alretty."

"That's right," nodded Andy. "He's down on Ruby, 'cause she wouldn't cotton to him. You remember what he said to her in front of the mill a couple of weeks ago. He's tryin' to get square. If Ruby was my girl I'd break his face for him if I got pulled in for it afterward."

"It wouldn't be any more than he deserves," replied Bob, as the boys started for their homes.

And thus ended the first day of the strike, as far as they were concerned.

CHAPTER XII.—The Scrap On Main Street.

By Wednesday, the third day of the strike, the company had managed to secure about two-thirds of the required help to run the mill. That morning, however, the new engineer didn't show up, and the manager had to send to Boston for another, so that the machinery didn't get in motion till after the noon hour. The Bayport Daily News, which published both a morning and afternoon edition, came out flat-footed for the strikers. It printed a good deal of unpleasant reading matter for Duncan Pritchard and the stockholders of the company. As almost every person in town sympathized more or less with the old hands, the owners of the mill experienced a coolness in the social and business atmosphere which they had never noticed before. Some of the stockholders privately expressed regret that they had voted for the reduction. Those who had voted against the cut took care to let the fact become known. Duncan Pritchard, however, believed he could afford to defy public opinion. When interviewed by the reporters he was aggressive and defiant. He repeated his assertion that the old hands were out of the mill for good. Dexter Pritchard owned a very handsome little sailboat, in which he and some of his friends cruised around the harbor, and sometimes along the coast outside, when the weather conditions were satisfactory to him. On Wednesday afternoon he and two cronies left the Bayport Billiard Parlors and started for the private wharf on the Pritchard property, off which the "Spray" was anchored. They were going to take a sail. It happened that Bob Chambers, Andy Ball and Jake Switzer were coming out of their club as Dexter and his associates came along Main Street. Bob, who was somewhat of an amateur sailor in his way, had borrowed a catboat for that afternoon, and was going to take Andy and Jake down the bay with him. As soon as Bob caught sight of the son of Duncan Pritchard he walked up and confronted him with a stern face.

"I want an explanation from you, Dexter Pritchard, of your attempt to ride over Ruby Norton on Monday," he demanded.

Dexter started back, glared at Bob, and raised his little Malacca cane in a threatening way.

"How dare you stop me on the street, your interfering puppy!" blustered the magnate's son.

Bob's eyes flashed at this insult, but he kept cool.

"I want an answer from you, Pritchard, and if it isn't satisfactory, I'll see that Ruby has you arrested. You'll find out you won't be permitted to endanger people's lives in this town merely to gratify a personal spite you have against them. And the fact that you are the son of the richest man in Bayport won't save you."

By this time Dexter's face was white with rage. "You—you pauper! You common mill boy! I've a mind to strike you to the sidewalk!" he cried, passionately.

"You'd better not try such a thing if you know when you're well off," replied Bob, coolly.

Dexter's answer was an attempt to bring his upraised cane down full on the mill boy's head. But it didn't land as the young aristocrat had intended. Bob had seen his purpose in his eyes, dodged quickly, seized and tore the cane from his grasp, and promptly knocked Dexter down.

"It's a fight!" grinned Andy to Jake.

"I don't dink!" answered the German boy; "pud off it vos dot udder fellers don't peen in id for a gobber cent."

Dexter looked dazed and confounded. He hardly knew what had happened to him, the shock had come so sudden. He sat up and stared stupidly about.

"Vill I hellup you ub?" asked Jake, making a bluff to offer his assistance, as the dude's companions stood well back and never offered to interfere. "I nefer expected to seen you seddin' yourseluf down py der sidevalks to rest, Misder Pritchard."

Dexter kicked out his legs with unexpected suddenness, and gave Switzer such a whack on the shins that the German lad lost his balance and sat down, too.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Andy. "I hope you didn't make a hole in the sidewalk, Jake."

A small crowd began to gather to see the fun.

"Tunder und blitzen! Vot you beobles found to laugh ad?" cried Jake, in a tone of disgust, as he picked himself up.

Dexter also scrambled to his feet and shook his fist at Bob.

"I will make you pay for that, you villain!" he cried, furiously. "I'll have you arrested for striking me, you scum!"

"Bah! Why don't you put up your fists like a little man?" jeered Andy, who felt disappointed that the mix-up was so brief.

"Py shinsher! He can pud his feets ub like a liddle donkey, I ped you!" growled the German boy.

"Give me my cane!" roared Dexter, making a snatch at it.

Bob stepped back, deliberately broke it across his knee and threw the pieces into the street. Dexter, almost wild with rage, rushed at Bob and struck at him with both fists, but the mill boy, with a smile, easily warded off the blows. Then the magnate's son kicked viciously at him. Bob caught his foot and he went down like a shot. The crowd laughed and jeered at young Pritchard, whom they recognized. The mill boy had their sympathy.

"Py Shorge! You don't done dot twice dimes mid imbunidy, I ped you. Der next dimes you pud mine shins against your feets I vill done dot, too."

"Come, let's go," said Bob to his two companions. "This little affair has attracted too much attention to suit me."

They pushed their way through the grinning mob, and were crossing the street when Dexter was assisted up by one of his friends. The young dude was in a furious rage over his discomfiture. Not seeing Bob, he glared at the circle of amused spectators, some of whom passed rather complimentary remarks about him. His friends, not relishing the situation, took hold of him and led him away. They had all they could do to pacify him. Finally he cooled down and the three continued on their way to the Pritchard grounds.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Taming of Dexter Pritchard.

Two hours later a finely modeled sloop yacht, about eighteen feet in length, and a trim-built catboat, not quite so long, were nearing a wooded island at the entrance to Bayport Harbor. Both, under bellying mainsail, were heeled to starboard, and darted ahead before the stiff six-knot breeze blowing off shore. The wind had steadily increased since the boats left their moorings, and Dexter Pritchard, who was steering the "Spray," was beginning to grow nervous. He would have turned back, but he was ashamed to do so, as he had boasted of his ability to handle his yacht under all weather conditions. Besides, she was practically safe, having four copper air tanks, so that she would not sink with half a dozen persons aboard, if she were full of water. Dexter, however, was by no means expert in the knack of sailing a boat, and now every time she made a sudden dip, when a sharp flaw struck the mainsail, he turned pale and wished he was on shore. It was different with Bob Chambers, in the "Foam" catboat.

He had taken lessons from the boatman who owned the little craft, and who was very friendly with him, and was able to handle the boat almost as well as its owner. He loved the water, and went out on the bay in the "Foam," or in swimming off the Point, whenever he got a chance. The "Spray" was the faster boat of the two, but was handicapped under her green owner. Dexter and his friends had got afloat first, yet by the time the mouth of the bay was almost reached the catboat had overhauled and passed the "Spray" to the leeward.

"Shall we come about or go outside?" asked Bob, as they were passing abreast of the island. "It's pretty rough yonder, and will give us a good shaking up."

"Oh, keep right on!" replied Andy.

"I don't know apoud dot," objected Jake. "Off id pen much rougher as here, you vill oxcoose me off I said nid."

"Ho! If you're afraid, we'll put you ashore on the island and take you up when we come back."

"I didn't said I vos afraidt; but off id peen all der same I yust so soon stood by der beach ubon a liddle vholes mineseluf to resd."

"Hello!" cried Bob at this juncture. "Those chaps yonder are in trouble."

He pointed to the "Spray," which was now floundering about in the trough of the sea, sweeping in from the Atlantic, her boom threshing the water way to the leeward. The fact of the matter was a sudden flaw had wrenched the main-sheet out of Dexter Pritchard's hand, and the boom, in consequence, had got away from him. It placed the party in an unpleasant position, which a skillful boatman would instantly have remedied by bringing the yacht up into the wind, when the boom would have swung back, and the sheet-line have been recovered. It was a simple thing to do, but Dexter lost his head and became terrified when he ought to have remained cool. He looked helplessly at the truant boom, and did nothing. The "Spray" was steered by a horizontal wheel—the tiller moving in the direction opposite to the way

the wheel was turned. Finally, Dexter, in his confusion, did the right thing accidentally—he pulled the wheel toward him—he was seated on the weather side of the steering gear. The boat at once answered to her helm and the boom swung in. Before it came quite within his reach, he stood up and reached for the sheet. Just then another flaw struck the sail, and away it went back again, for Dexter had let go of the wheel. The boat dipped smartly to the leeward, the boy lost his balance and was precipitated overboard.

"By George!" cried Bob, who, with his companions, was watching the "Spray" intently. "Dexter Pritchard is overboard!"

He altered the "Foam's" course at once, and bore down on the spot where the young aristocrat had disappeared beneath the rough water off the island.

"Py shinsher! He vos a gone goose, I ped you!" exclaimed the German boy, in some excitement.

"He is if he can't swim a little," said Andy.

"I don't seen him, do you, Boppy?"

"Yes, there he is, just a fathom or so beyond his hat."

"I vill got der poat-hooks und pull him oud, off he don't gone py der bottoms too quick."

Before the "Foam" got close enough for the boys to reach Dexter, he disappeared once more.

"Dot's pad," cried Jake, when he saw the water close over Pritchard's head. "Do you dink he peen deat now for sure, Boppy?"

"I hope not," replied Bob, anxiously, for he was all eagerness to save the life of his enemy. "He ought to come up again. Keep your eyes skinned for him, fellows; it's his last chance."

"There he is!" exclaimed Andy, presently.

Dexter had come up not six feet away.

"Py shinsher! I got him now, I ped you!" cried Switzer, reaching for the drowning boy with the boat-hook.

But he hadn't. A flaw struck the "Foam," the boat dipped, and Bob had to luff her up. The German boy, feeling he was losing his balance, dropped the hook into the water, where it sank at once, and grabbed Andy to save himself. Bob saw that it was all up with Dexter unless he took the promptest kind of action.

"Take the helm, Andy!" he cried, in ringing tones.

Peeling off his hat and jacket, and kicking off his low-cut shoes, Bob plunged into the water, diving straight at young Pritchard, who, now quite unconscious, was slowly sinking for the last time. He caught the boy a foot under the surface and came to the top with him. As soon as he appeared, Jake flung a rope to him, which he caught. Inside of a minute the two were dragged into the cockpit of the "Foam."

"Py shinsher! Dot vos a narrow squak for Misdar Pritchard, I ped you!"

"We'll have to go ashore," said Bob, "and bring Dexter to his senses."

They laid the half-drowned boy face downward in the cockpit and about half a pint of salt water ran out of his mouth. Bob ran the catboat under the lee of the outermost point of the island, and held her close to the beach, while Andy and Jake carried Dexter ashore. Then, after telling them what to do with their charge, he steered out after the "Spray," which still rolled about at the mercy of the waves and was drifting out to sea, the boys

on board of her not knowing what to do in the emergency. As he approached her stern from the leeward, Bob watched his chance, let his mainsail down by the run, and then leaped aboard of the "Spray," with the painter of the "Foam" in his hand. It was a risky move, but the only thing to be done under the circumstances.

If he hadn't timed his movements to a nicety he would probably have landed in the water instead of where he aimed for. With Bob it was then but the work of a moment to recover the stray boom and sheet. After that he sailed the "Spray" to the island, towing the catboat after her, and secured both craft to the beach by passing their painters around a big stone. Dexter's friends were pretty well frightened by their recent experience, and were glad to feel the solid earth under their feet once more. Pritchard was brought around after a time, but he was a pretty fishy looking object.

"Vell, how you feldt now?" Jake asked him as soon as he was able to sit up. His arrogant manner had completely disappeared, and he was as humble as any boy could be. He seemed to realize that he had escaped death by the skin of his teeth, and that fact made a powerful impression on him. When one of his cronies told him that Bob Chambers, at the risk of his own life, had saved him from a watery grave, he didn't say a word for some time. Finally he motioned to Bob, who was wringing the water out of his garments, and the mill boy, curiously to hear what he had to say, went up to him.

"I want to thank you for what you did for me," he said, in a low voice, with downcast eyes. "I don't see how you came to do it, as I haven't been a friend of yours. But you shan't regret it. I'll make it all right by you—at least my father will. I'll see that he gives you another \$1,000. He can afford it."

"Stop!" cried Bob. "You mustn't talk about paying me for what I did for you. I'm not such a cannibal as to see you or any one else drown if I could help it. I'm glad I managed to save you. I don't expect, nor will I accept, anything but your gratitude, if it's in you, for my services, which you are welcome to."

"I suppose you've a right to be down on me," answered Dexter, without looking up.

"I'm not down on you. I'm satisfied to let the past go if you say so."

"I'm willing to be friends if you are," Pritchard said at last, though the word evidently cost him an effort.

"I'm afraid you'll change your mind when you get over this shock," answered Bob, doubtfully.

"No, I won't. I mean what I say. You've done me a good turn—you've saved my life. You might have let me drown after the way I've treated you. You're different from any of the other fellows I know. I'm going to be your friend if you'll let me. I'll see that you get back in the mill, and that Ruby Norton does, too, and your friends here also. My father will do anything I want."

"Well, if you want to be friendly with me I'm not going to object. I'm only a mill boy, you know, and not in your social class."

"That doesn't make any difference with me as far as you are concerned, Bob Chambers. Will you shake hands with me?"

"Certainly," and Bob held out his hand.

Dexter got up and took it.

"We are friends now from this out," he said, with an earnestness strangely at variance with his old-time manners; and Bob wondered how long his regeneration would last.

CHAPTER XIV.—Bob Meets With A Surprise.

It was getting near sundown and Bob proposed that they ought to return to town. Dexter Pritchard protested that he couldn't think of going back till he had dried his clothes. So all hands gathered a quantity of brush and driftwood and made a bonfire. While their garments were being dried, Bob and Dexter took refuge in the handsome little cabin of the "Spray," where the two boys talked together as if they had been old friends instead of recent enemies.

"Where's Jake?" asked Bob, while he was putting on his dry clothes.

"He saw a squirrel on that log yonder, and gave chase to it," laughed Andy. "He's the craziest fellow I ever saw."

"Hi, Jake!" shouted Bob, fashioning his hands into a speaking trumpet. "We're waiting for you."

All the same Switzer didn't answer, nor did he appear within the next ten minutes, although all hands yelled to him several times.

"Where the dickens can he have got to?" said Bob. "We'll have to hunt him up, for it's time we got a move on."

Leaving Dexter seated on a rock, the rest of the boys scattered through the brush and the wood beyond, yelling, "Jake!" every once and a while; but never a sign of the German boy did they see. Bob followed a sort of ravine among the rocks and scrub leading toward the center of the island, and got separated more and more from the other three. Suddenly, as he turned the corner of a big rock he ran smack into the arms of a man. Before he knew what was in the wind, he was thrown down, his arms secured behind, and a handkerchief tied tightly over his mouth. Two men had hold of him, and it took but a glance for him to recognize them. They were Jake Flanders and Luke Sparrow, and they looked the very picture of hard luck.

"So we've got hold of you ag'in, eh?" said Flanders, with a malicious grin. "You put a spoke in our wheel a week ago, and we had to cut town at a lively gait. How you managed to escape the wheels of that freight beats me, but it seems you did. We've been watchin' you chaps since you landed on the island, and a-figgerin' how we could put out flukes onto you, and now you kindly walks into our parlor as the fly did to the spider. Now we've got you where the hair is short, we'll pay off the score we've ag'in you."

"What are you goin' to do to him, Jim?" asked Sparrow.

"What should we do to him after he went and sp'iled that scheme of our to do up Wells and got us spotted by the p'lice?" said Flanders, savagely.

Sparrow regarded the boy vindictively, but didn't say anything.

"We've ketched him jest in time, seein' as we

were goin' to cut and run to-night, after we've fixed that job at the mill. It'll be satisfaction to know we've got square with this young jigger."

Flanders yanked Bob along by the collar, as if he were a bale of goods, and thrust him through the bushes into a dark aperture among the rocks, where they left him. In the meantime the rest of the boys came upon Jake, watching the end of an old decayed log into which the squirrel he was after had disappeared. They soon found there was an opening at the other end through which the cute little animal had got away, and they gave Switzer the laugh. Then they returned to the shore, where they waited for Bob to turn up. It was now beginning to grow dark, and Dexter decided that he couldn't wait on the island any longer. So he and his friends embarked on the "Spray" and started for town, leaving Andy and the German boy wondering what had become of Bob.

"Vot you dinks, Andy, do we staid here all night?" asked Jake, when the gloom grew deep on the surface of the bay.

"Search me, Jake. We can't go without Bob."

"Dot's righdt; but vhere he has tooken himself off do, dot's der questions?"

"Ask me somethin' easier."

"Meype he felled down somevheres among der rocks, vot you dinks?" asked Jake, a bit anxiously.

"I hope not. It's all your fault, anyway, for chasin' that squirrel," growled Andy. "What did you do such a fool thing for?"

"For vhy did I done id? I haf a veakness for a life squirrel."

Andy snorted and kicked a hole in the sand with his heels. As time passed, the boys grew more anxious and impatient. They kept up the fire on the beach, to let the absent Bob know they were waiting for him, as well as to serve as a guide for him.

"I don't see how we can go and hunt him up in the dark," said Andy. "It will be a nice thing if an accident has happened to him."

"Couldn't ve dook a lanterns mit us?" suggested Jake. "Dere vos one py der poat cabins."

"We ought to do somethin'," said Andy, who was greatly perplexed over the situation.

Finally he decided to get the lantern, and go off and search the island with Jake. They piled a lot of fresh fuel on the fire, including a good-sized log, and then started on their quest. They came to the ravine which Bob had entered and stumbled along through the brush and rocks, swinging the lantern to and fro.

"Dis peen der vorstest shobs I efer seen, I ped me your life," said Jake.

At that moment he tripped over a tough creeper running across his path and pitched against the side of the ravine. "Shimmany cribs! Hellup!" Andy stopped and swung the light of the lantern in that direction. Half of the German boy's body had vanished through the bushes and he was beating the night air with his heels. His voice came to Andy in a muffled strain, as if he was half smothered in a hole. Andy put the lantern down and dragged him out of his predicament by the heels. Jake's face was scratched and covered with soft dirt.

"Well, you're a sight for sore eyes," growled Andy.

Switzer spat out a mouthful of dirt, with a grimace.

"Don'd say nottings, bud gif me der light. Dere vos somedings alife in dot holes, und id don'd peen an animals, neider."

"What are you givin' me?" replied Andy, incredulously.

"You waits a liddle."

He bent down the bushes, and the lantern rays disclosed a yawning hole among the rocks. Jake thrust the lantern into the aperture and then gave a yell.

"Py shinser! Off dot ain'd Boppy in dere, you vos a liar!"

"Get out!" cried Andy, in some excitement.

"Vell, dook a look vor yourseluf, off you don'd pelief id."

Andy got down on his hands and knees and looked into the hole.

"By jingo! It is, for a fact. What's he doin' in there, with a handkerchief over his mouth and his hands behind him?"

Bob heard them outside and kicked vigorously with his legs.

"Dit you efer seen anydings like dot?" cried the German boy. "He is kickin' his feets like fun. Somedings vos der madder mid him. Grab his feets und ve haf him oud righdt away quick."

Each caught one of Bob's limbs and pulled. Out he glided into the circle of lantern light.

"Why, he's bound and gagged!" exclaimed Andy, in amazement.

The German boy's eyes stuck out like goggles. Andy yanked the handkerchief off Bob's mouth and then fished in his pocket for his knife.

"Thanks, old man," said Bob, drawing a long breath of relief.

"How came you to be in this shape, Bob?" asked Andy, as he cut away at the cord which held his friend's hands. "Who did this?"

"Who did it? Jim Flanders and Luke Sparrow. They've been hiding on this island since they skipped from the police," replied Bob, regaining his feet.

"You don'd said so!" ejaculated Jake.

"Hidin' on the island, are they?" cried Andy. "Then we'll hurry back to town and send the cops down here after them."

"I'm afraid that won't do any good now," replied Bob, shaking his head.

"Why not?"

"Because I guess they've gone away by this time. They've got a boat somewhere along shore. I heard them say they were goin' to leave this section to-night. Before they go they're going to do something to the mill. Set it afire, I dare say, if they can manage it. We must prevent them."

"But why did they tie and gag you, and stow you into that hole?"

"In revenge for my exposure of that infernal-machine plot of theirs."

"Great Scott! You might never have been found till long after you had starved to death. What cold-blooded rascals they are!"

"They meant to do me up all right," said Bob, as the three came in sight of the glowing embers of the bonfire.

"Und dey meant to done you ub dot nights dey pud you py der tracks on in der cud. Vell, id's a

fine dings do peen borned luggy, I ped you. You fall your feets on efery dime, Boppy."

"Why, where is the boat?" asked Bob, looking around the spot where the "Foam" had been moored.

Jake and Andy looked, too. The catboat had mysteriously disappeared.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

"I believe those chaps have taken our boat," said Bob at last.

"Glory halleluyah! What are we goin' to do, then?" gasped Andy, in dismay.

"Yah. Ve are left pehindt in der soub."

"This is tough," remarked Bob, looking at the blank faces of his friends.

"I should say it is," grumbled Andy.

"Vell, I ped you."

"If Flanders and Sparrow took the catboat they must have left their own boat somewhere about. They never could have come to this island without one."

"Most likely it was a rowboat," said Andy. "That's why they sneaked the 'Foam.'"

"No matter what it is, we must hunt it up if we want to get away from this place to-night. I'm anxious to prevent those rascals doing any injury to the mill. If it burned down, people would say the strikers set it on fire, and it would be bound to hurt us."

"It would that," admitted Andy.

"Well, come along; we'll examine the shore, and see if we can find a boat of any kind," said Bob, starting forward along the water's edge with the lantern.

They walked half-way around the island before their search was rewarded by the discovery of a small flatboat drawn up on the beach of a little cove. One pair of rudely-made oars lay under the water which half-filled her. Under Bob's directions they lifted the flatboat on edge and dumped out the water that had accumulated in her. Then, after a great deal of trouble, they shoved her afloat. Each of the lads took a turn at the oars, for though the distance was short from this point of the island to the main shore, the boat was clumsy and made slow progress against the tide which was running out. It was after ten o'clock when they landed. By the time they reached the vicinity of the mill it was past midnight. The big brick structure, surrounded by its tall, white-washed fence, loomed up before them dark and silent.

"Andy, you go to the police station and tell the officer in charge that Jim Flanders and Luke Sparrow are in this neighborhood, and have designs on the mill to-night," said Bob.

Andy immediately started on his errand.

"Now, Jake, you go down to yonder corner of the fence and keep your eyes wide open for intruders. Those fellows will have to scale the fence to get inside the enclosure. If you see anything suspicious come back and let me know."

Bob, left alone, crouched down at the corner and kept a close watch on two sides of the mill property. Presently Bob's heart gave a jump. Two forms came slouching up from the road.

They passed within two yards of the boy without noticing him. Bob immediately identified them as Flanders and Sparrow. They sneaked along the fence, the boy creeping after them, till they came to the small gate beyond the engine-house. Here they paused, and soon Bob heard the crackling of wood. The door was forced and the rascals vanished inside the enclosure. The boy cautiously followed. Flanders and his pal knew their way like a book, and headed for a window opening into the packing-room on the ground floor. They raised the lower sash and entered, shutting it down again. Bob came up and tried to peer through the glass. All was dark inside.

"That room is full of inflammable material," breathed the boy, "and those chaps know every nook and corner about the place. I must find the watchman."

He ran quickly from point to point, without seeing the night guardian. At length he reached the side door of the office. There he found the watchman seated on the step with his head against the jamb. He was snoring loudly. Bob bent down and caught the overpowering fumes of liquor from his mouth.

"Intoxicated!" gasped Bob, "and at the moment when he's most wanted. What shall I do? The police won't be here for a while yet. Ten minutes will be enough time for those scoundrels to set a blaze that will finish the mill."

Bob tried the side door and found it unlocked. He stepped over the watchman's inert body and entered the building. Then he removed his shoes and moved quietly in the direction of the packing-room, where the danger threatened. With much caution he opened the door and entered. Then he could make out the two rascals moving about at one end of the room. Presently a match was struck and soon little spurts of flame began to curl up around a pile of shavings and wood in the midst of a lot of empty cases. The peril of the building was imminent. Throwing every other consideration to the winds, Bob dashed forward with a wild whoop. Flanders then noticed that the boy was alone, and he stopped his companion's headlong rush with an oath.

"It's only a boy," he grated to Sparrow. "Come back."

They dashed at Bob like a pair of enraged tigers. He saw them coming and snatched up a stick of wood to defend himself. The light of the fire flashed in his face and they recognized him.

"You here!" roared Flanders, with another oath. Both he and Sparrow staggered at sight of the boy they thought safely secured on the island.

"Yes, I'm here," replied Bob, fearlessly, "and the police will be here in a moment, too."

Sparrow seized a stick and struck at Bob. The boy warded off the blow, but its force sent him staggering against a pile of boxes. He slipped and went down.

"Now we have him!" cried Flanders.

The two rushed upon him, when the boxes above that had been so rudely shaken toppled over and fell with a crash, burying the villains under them. Bob, half stunned, crawled out from under, the blood streaming from a nasty wound on his head. Flanders and Sparrow never made a move. Seeing the fire was beyond his efforts to

subdue, Bob reeled out of the room, staggered to the door of the office, burst it in, ran to the telephone and sent the alarm over the wires. Then he fainted away, and was found there five minutes afterward when Andy and three policemen rushed into the building. The smoke was pouring through the place, and the fire gaining great headway. An officer took the receiver from Bob's nerveless hand and sent the second message to the fire department. The packing room was a sea of flames when the fire companies reached the scene. By energetic action the fire was confined to the basement and finally subdued. Bob was, in the meantime, revived and told his story. Manager Wells was aroused from his sleep, and reached the mill in time to listen to it.

"My brave boy," he said, "you certainly have saved the mill."

Once more Bob Chambers became the hero of the hour. His desperate fight with Flanders and Sparrow, whose charred remains were found in the ruins of the packing-room on the following day, was graphically reported in next morning's News, and set the whole town talking about the boy. A week later there was another meeting of the stockholders of the Bayport Woolen Mills, which public opinion, through the Daily News, forced Duncan Pritchard to call. At this meeting the wage question which had caused the strike was reconsidered and the action of the previous meeting reversed.

Bob Chambers was called before the stockholders' meeting, complimented in warm terms for his intrepid conduct, and presented with a check from the company for \$5,000. The insurance companies holding risks on the mill combined in testifying their appreciation of the boy's splendid efforts toward saving the mill from destruction to the extent of a check for \$1,000. Contrary to Bob's expectation, Dexter Pritchard did not go back on his word, but made good as a friend of the boy who had saved his life. Duncan Pritchard sent for Bob, expressing the gratitude he and Mrs. Pritchard felt for what he did for the family, and tried to force his check for \$10,000 on the boy, which Bob politely but firmly refused to accept. Then Mr. Pritchard promoted him to an excellent position in the office of the mill, with the view of his ultimately filling the office of manager. A year later Bob became assistant to Manager Wells. It is generally understood by the friends of both the young people that Bob and Ruby will be married next spring, when the former attains his nineteenth year.

Next week's issue will contain "FAME BEFORE THE FOOTLIGHTS; or, THE BOY WHO BOSSED THE THEATER."

Auntie (to her young niece)—Guess what I know, Mary—there's a little baby brother upstairs. He came this morning when you were asleep. Mary—Did he? Then I know who brought him—it was the milkman. Auntie—What do you mean, Mary? Mary—Why, I looked at the sign on his cart yesterday, and it said "Families supplied daily."

CURRENT NEWS

NEW COUNTERFEIT BILLS

Counterfeit \$50, \$20 and \$10 bills have been discovered, according to a warning issued by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. The \$20 and the \$50 bills are drawn against the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, while the \$10 counterfeit is against the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. They apparently are the work of the same counterfeiters who have been keeping the Treasury Department busy for some time. Nearly every feature of the new fakes is identical with previous counterfeits.

COWBOY ETIQUETTE

Cowboy etiquette is very rigid; much more so than that in higher society. One need not go very high in the social scale to find a taboo on a man who asks for soup twice. Probably a rule which extends farthest is against a man eating with his knife. On the contrary, the cowboys apparently regard eating with your knife as a correct thing. Therefore, when a restaurant keeper in Kansas City objected to a cowboy guest eating his baked

beans with a knife the cowboy ran true to form by shooting him. One cannot be too particular in conforming himself to the etiquette that he may find wherever he sojourns.

BAGGING THE FOREST FIRE

The New York State Forestry Association, Albany, N. Y., has launched a campaign against forest fire unique in the history of fire prevention. The association has distributed over 200,000 paper lunch bags bearing a fire warning in bold type, and requesting that all who go into the open exercise care with matches, smoking materials and camp fires, and avoid creating litter and rubbish in the forest. "Keep God's Country Clean and Safe" is the keynote of the paper-bag campaign.

The project is started as a result of investigation which proves that more than half of all the forest fires in the State are caused by carelessness, and that 20 per cent. in 1922 were credited to smokers, including campers, hunters and fishermen.

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CHAPTER XIII.

A Carnival Of Death.

Jack was ready. They had brought along a pickaxe and spade for the purpose, and with these tools they descended into the shallow sink.

There was no trace of previous digging to be seen.

"No use to hunt for it," declared Nemo. "We may be a mile out of the way. Let's try it right here."

The ground was a stiff clay, but Nemo, with the pick, proved to be good for it. Jack shoveled away and beat the earth fine, but there was no trace of gold.

"Hopeless task, I'm afraid," declared Nemo, striking his pick into the earth again.

When he tried to get it out it refused to budge.

"Caught in something?" cried Jack.

He attacked the clay with his spade, and so loosened it that Nemo was able to withdraw the pick, and with it came a big golden nugget, into which the point had been driven.

"Well, well! We certainly made a find," cried Nemo. "There's gold here, all right." The point of the pick had wedged itself so deeply in the crevice of the nugget that it was only with considerable difficulty that they were able to withdraw it.

"How much do you imagine it weighs?" questioned Jack, trying his own hand at the problem as he spoke.

"Your first guess," answered Nemo.

"About twenty-five pounds."

The mask added five pounds to this when he came to try it. In point of size, the nugget, which, be it understood, was mixed with some quartz, was about as big as Jack's head.

They pushed about here and there for twenty minutes beyond the hour, but made no further find. As for the small nuggets mentioned by Ben Budd, they could not discover a trace of them.

Evidently this is not the right point," declared Nemo, "and now, my boy, we must be going. I have overstayed as it is, and my own affairs demand my attention. I'll be frank with you. I fear Sanders, and that with good reason. I want to locate him, if it is a possible thing."

"We'll go now," assented Jack, and, with the nugget stowed away in the tool-box, they started.

Nemo drove the car with great rapidity completely around the lake, estimating the distance at about five miles, but there was not a trace of the prospectors.

"What can have become of them?" Jack remarked, when they reached their starting point.

"This confirms my suspicions," declared Nemo. "Listen, my boy. I must do a little further explaining. Among other crotchets which the doctor has in his crazy brain, is that I have a vast treasure in gold hidden somewhere in the house. He is so secretive that I doubt if he has ever mentioned it to any of my Mestizos, but he may well have told his cousin Sanders, if he has confided in him, which, after all, may not be the case, for he has always professed deep gratitude for what I have done for him, and there is the possibility that I misjudge him and that the Mestizos are at the bottom of this affair. Still, I fear Sanders and cannot rest, knowing him to be so near me."

"And yet, after all, the man may not be your enemy. Sanders is a common name."

"The initials are correct. Besides, the doctor has acted strangely ever since his return. I never knew him to be quite so bad."

"What about Andy, the hunchback? Do you know, it struck me that he might be crazy, too."

"He is slightly so. You are right."

"And so is the woman who yells murder in the night," thought Jack, but he did not like to go any further.

"Where now?" he asked.

"Back to the sink," was the reply. "A wild idea has suddenly seized me. You saw those cars dashing ahead in the dark. They ran them at night by compass, to take advantage of the coolness, I suppose. Dangerous business, boy, with that sink ahead of them."

"What if they should have run headlong into it?" cried Jack.

"And that's my sudden idea. Let us put it to the proof."

Jack had never thought of such a possibility, but the idea took firm hold of him now, as they made all haste for the sink.

Reaching it, Nemo drove more slowly, following its edge. It was sand again now, and sure enough they had not covered more than four miles, when they suddenly came upon the trail of the two cars. They ran parallel about fifty feet apart. Both trails ended at the very edge of the sink.

"Heaven have mercy on their souls, poor wretches!" said Nemo, solemnly, as he removed his hat.

Jack followed his example.

"Nothing to fear from that bunch," he said. "But to prove it, I'll get out and have a look."

He lay down flat and peered over the rim of the old mud crater.

Far below him lay the wrecks of the two cars, but he could only discern one body—that of a large man.

"There?" called Nemo.

"That's what they are," replied Jack, rising. "It's just as you thought. They ran over in the dark. My, my, but this desert is a terrible place!"

"You know little of its horrors. You have yet to be caught in a sandstorm," replied Nemo, adding:

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

CROSS 556 FEET IN AIR

The highest cross in the world, on the spire of the Methodist Temple, 556 feet from the ground, is looking down on Chicago. The temple is a church and office building at Clark and Washington streets.

The cross is visible for miles, and at night searchlights will play continuously on it. The cross is 12 feet in height and the cross bar is 6 feet long.

FINDS 15 YEAR OLD BEER IN WELL

While cleaning the well on the Flaherty estate at Warehouse Point, Hartford, Conn., Patrolman "Pat" Landers found three bottles of choice Tivoli steamed beer and an old Irish butler's crock. The liquor was placed in a paper bag and hung in the well fifteen years ago by Roger Flaherty at the time of John Kelley's memorable wedding. The bag had burst and the bottles had dropped safely to the bottom of the well. Since then several men had fished in vain for the treasure.

BOY IN PARCEL POST

Frank Potter, eight years old, had been visiting an aunt, Mrs. William Gryder, a dozen or more miles from Orrick, Mo., the boy's home, but when it was time to return to Orrick there was no one to accompany him.

Then along came Lorenzo Hicks, rural mail carrier, whose route is eighteen miles and passes Mrs. Gryder's place, and to him the question was put: "Reckon we can mail him?"

"You can send animals by parcel post, so I don't see why you can't send a boy," Hicks replied.

The boy was weighed and, having had a pretty good time at his aunt's dinner table, tipped the beam at seventy pounds, which took thirty-six cents. He was stamped on his chest and a foot and addressed to Mrs. Potter with the notice that "If not called for within five days return to Mrs. William Gryder, Crab Orchard, Mo." The card also bore the warning that the boy was "perishable."

Frank was bundled into the mail carrier's car and delivered safely home. He took along a bundle of country-grown bones for his dog, which cost two cents extra postage.

REINDEER IN NEED OF CHECKREIN

W. L. Lopp, superintendent of education for the natives of Northern Alaska, has gone north from Seattle, Wash., to put a checkrein on the reindeer. Reports reaching Government officials here telling of prodigious increases in the Government owned herds, which now wander in great migrations over the vast unfenced pasturages, prompted his departure.

It was not so long ago that the reindeer was hailed respectfully as the coming meat supply of the United States. Long after the herds of cattle had been swept from the plains, it was predicted, the quickly multiplying reindeer would furnish venison for tables throughout the country.

At least half of the prediction has been verified at present. The reindeer have increased. In the last year or two the reindeer service has outgrown completely its organization, and with it has made hopelessly inadequate the means provided for marketing the meat.

There are now, according to reports, more than 300,000 head roaming the ranges. The native herders who undertook to care for them find themselves with herds far larger than they can handle. Unless something drastic is done it is feared the advancing reindeer may overcome the citizens of the Territory. Mr. Lopp has been suggested as the drastician. For it should be noted that the 300,000 reindeer set only a very temporary mark. During 1923 80,000 calves have been born.

Two or three years ago most of the native herders, with whom Mr. Lopp will confer in an effort to arrange some marketing machinery, started with herds which seldom numbered more than fifty head. Now they have from 1,000 to 5,000, and the end is not yet. Reindeer marriages, indeed, are said to be more frequent than ever.

Mr. Lopp's problem probably will not be solved by arranging to market the reindeer venison in Alaska. There are millions of caribou which may be had for the shooting, and venison hence is so plentiful that the idea of purchasing it from the Government finds little support.

The immediate problem in congestion of herds, probably will be solved by the establishment of new stations in more remote parts of Alaska.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

"A" BATTERY CONNECTION

The plate of a battery are called electrodes. In a dry cell the zinc electrode is the negative terminal and the binding post in the centre, on top of the carbon electrode, is the positive terminal. It is important that the positive and negative "A" battery connections be correct. After the set is in operation it is always a good plan to reverse the "A" battery connections to see which arrangement produces the loudest signals.

AUTOMOBILE FOUND BY RADIO

Radio is evidently a good medium in which to insert a Lost and Found advertisement. An automobile was stolen from a motor company in Kansas and a few hours later news of the robbery was broadcast. In ten minutes after the announcement slipped on the aerial wires a long-distance call from a farmer told the motor dealer that a car answering the description he had picked up from the ether had been abandoned in a ditch and a neighboring farmer had the car in his yard.

THE REFLEX CIRCUIT

The "reflex" method of obtaining efficient amplification provides an extremely flexible means for securing magnification of the radio signal. Several stages of radio frequency amplification detection and one or two stages of audio frequency amplification may be used with rectification of signal obtained by the use of either a vacuum tube or a crystal. The various stages may be coupled through the use of choke coils, resistance coils, or the usual types of amplifying transformers. The use of radio frequency amplification permits reception of the incoming signal on a small loop antenna, and after detection the energy of the signal is further strengthened by audio frequency amplification so that a loud speaker may be operated.

QUEER NOISES

When tuning a set you hear a ringing noise in the phones and the same takes place when you touch the cabinet or jar the table. This makes it impossible to tune properly and the noise is annoying. The noise is due to vibration of the elements of the vacuum tube and are called "microphonic noises." The elements of the tube, especially the grid, vibrate when jarred. It may be overcome by mounting the tube sockets on rubber or spring bases, so that the mechanical shocks are absorbed. Ringing noises are sometimes caused by loose variable condenser plates, which vibrate and change the capacity of the condenser when they are turned or jarred. Microphonic noises are undoubtedly the cause of your trouble.

"WHICH IS BEST?" IS OFTEN ASKED

The question is often asked, which is the better circuit, the Armstrong super-regenerator or the simple regenerative hook-up? The two circuits are not comparable directly. The super-regenera-

tive hook-up is much more difficult to operate, and when it does work it gives greater volume to signals from near-by stations, but does not have much effect on weak waves from distant stations. The simple regenerative set will give more satisfactory results in general.

A set tuned to receive signals on the 272-meter wave length will pick up any other station within its range using the same wave length.

KILOCYCLES IN RADIO

The Second National Radio Conference which met last March, introduced a method of designating radio waves which may not be familiar to all those interested in radio work. This is the use of frequency in kilocycles (abbreviated kc.) instead of wave-length in meters. This practice has many advantages, and it is believed that it will eventually replace the other method of designation. The separation of the frequencies of transmitting stations to prevent interference is an important matter, and the necessary separation as expressed in frequency is the same no matter what the frequencies of the two stations may be, while it is variable and quite misleading when expressed in meters. Thus, the frequency band existing between 150 to 200 meters (2,000 to 1,500 kc.) is enormously wider than the band from 1,000 to 1,050 meters (300 to 386 kc.). While it is possible to carry on 50 simultaneous radio telephone communications between 150 and 200 meters, only one could be carried on between 1,000 and 1,050 meters. It is very simple to obtain the approximate relation between kilocycles and meters. For example, knowing the wave-length in meters, divide 300,000 by the number of kilocycles, which will give the wave-length in meters. A table which may be used for rapid and accurate conversion can be obtained from the radio laboratory of the Bureau of Standards.

GOOD RESULTS FROM VACUUM TUBE DETECTORS

In the reception of radio signals a vacuum tube detector used in conjunction with the regenerative circuit of the "tickler coil" or "tuned plate" type, produces results which are practically the equivalent of one stage of radio-frequency amplification combined with a vacuum tube detector non-regenerative circuit. This is due to the fact that, in a regenerative circuit, the radio-frequency oscillations which pass through the detector and flow in the plate circuit are fed back to the grid circuit and reinforce the original oscillation. As a result, the amplified signal causes greater voltage variations on the grid, which in turn produces greater variations in the plate current.

If two or more stages of radio-frequency amplifications are combined with a regenerative circuit, several advantages are observed. First, a loop antenna may be used to replace the outdoor type thus permitting the exclusion of signals from unwanted stations due to the directional properties possessed by the loop. There is also a

considerable reduction in static interference. Second, the feeble impulses which reach the antenna, from distant transmitting stations, are built up to a strength sufficient to actuate the detector, thus increasing to a marked degree the effective range of the set. Third, only signals of radio-frequency are amplified, that is, signals which have a frequency above audibility, resulting in a considerable reduction in interference. Fourth, the insertion of radio-frequency amplification between the antenna and the regenerative circuit effectually prevents the antenna system from radiating the energy of oscillations which may occur in the detector tube circuit as the result of regeneration being carried to a point where the tube acts as a local oscillator.

BROADCASTING IN SWEDEN

Broadcasting in Sweden is now receiving careful consideration, based on the experiences of other countries which may be drawn upon quite liberally at this late date. It is understood that a Swedish company has proposed a plan to the Swedish Government. This company seeks a joint monopoly with the Government in the matter of radio broadcasting. The plan provides for extensive co-operation with the Government, which is to erect transmitting stations successively. These stations will be at the disposal of the new operating company at least five hours a day for an annual fee corresponding to 6 per cent. of the cost of construction of each station. In addition, the company must pay for the power as well as for the tubes used. It is suggested that individual owners of receiving sets be required to pay an annual license fee of 20 krona, or about \$5.40, and that societies, places of entertainment, and so on, pay a maximum license fee of 1,000 krona. Any make of receiving set may be used. The radio entertainment program includes general news, economic reports, weather reports, lectures, music and so so. On Sundays religious programs will be given. Regarding the broadcasting of advertising matter, the new company endorses the Government's recommendation that this be limited. It proposes that such material be of the type usually run in newspapers or reading notices. The danger of unfair competition with newspapers in the distribution of news will be avoided through co-operation with the Central Co-operative News Agency of the Swedish press, which will select and edit all the news. The Government is to have full rights at all times to broadcast urgent reports, even during the company's allotted period, without charge.

RECEIVERS SELECTIVE TUNE BROADLY

The first demand of any radio receiving set is that it tune sharply, and be selective. Now it is quite possible for a set to be sharp and still not selective.

The difference between these two characteristics is best explained by reference to a definite set. Assume we have a two variometer variocoupler affair employing cheap instruments whose windings are soaked in shellac or collodion. In using the outfit, it is usually found that the wave length

band of say 260 to 500 meters is confined to a dial movement of only 35 or 40 degrees (on a scale marked to 100). In tuning in several stations, the actual adjustments of the variometers are sharp to the point of almost being critical, but the separation on the dials is so small that the local broadcasters all but fall in on each other. To get distant stations on wave lengths between those of the locals is then practically impossible. Now such a set tunes sharply, but is hardly selective.

On the other hand, if the variometers are properly designed, so that the distributed capacity is at a minimum and so that the inductance variation proceeds uniformly, the tuning is just as sharp as before, but there is a much greater dial movement between adjustments. Thus, weaker signals can be tuned in without undue interference from powerful nearby stations. As contrasted with the first set, the wave band mentioned is covered by a full rotation of the dial. This is ideal, and high grade outfits are so made.

The rare case of selectivity without sharpness is found in the simple crystal set. It is easy enough to construct efficient tuning coils and condensers which provide as much adjustment as with a bulb set, but the inherent resistance of the crystal itself broadens the tuning to such an extent that the separation of two or three different signals is a hopeless job.

RADIO UNIVERSITY

The Radio Broadcasting Department of the American Telephone and Telegraph Company and the Home Study Division of Columbia University announce that they are beginning a series of experiments to determine the educational value of radio broadcasting and the most acceptable way to present educational matter.

A series of special lectures on English literature have been prepared for radio delivery by Prof. Hoxie M. Fairchild, Supervisor of English of the Home Study Division of Columbia University. The first three of these talks were given on July 17, 20 and 24 at 7.30 P. M. Each lasted ten minutes, so that the interest of the audience was held throughout.

The American Telephone and Telegraph Company has been making an extended study of many phases of radio broadcasting. It has experimented with every kind of program material. It is felt that anything presented by radio must be highly interesting matter, and that the broadcasting of educational material is limited to such subjects as can be presented in an inspiring way. One of these is English literature and for this reason the Columbia University authorities are co-operating with WEAFF, determined upon a series of lectures on English literature to begin with.

All letters received from the radio audience by WEAFF in response to programs are carefully studied and tabulated in order to determine definitely just what the preferences of the radio audience are.

The co-operation of Columbia University in the presentation of educational matter will materially assist in discovering the most effective way of preparing it so that it will be of the greatest benefit to the radio audience.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

"DISAPPEARING LAKE" GOES DRY

University of Colorado naturalists are baffled by the "disappearing lake" of Nederland, near the Arapahoe glacier, which has vanished.

On July 14 there was no water in the bed of the lake. The following day water began to show. On July 27 the lake was half filled and on Aug. 4 the high water mark was reached, 6 feet higher than the level of the lake, with a water depth of nearly 30 feet in a lake 100 by 200 feet wide.

One theory advanced is that the water had found an outlet through the ice of Arapahoe glacier.

RAT TRAP MADE BY WARD A SUCCESS

A large rat trap made by Walter S. Ward, recently acquitted of the killing of Clarence Peters, while he was confined in the White Plains County jail, has been kept as the only exhibit of Ward's stay in the jail for six weeks.

The trap is considered a fine piece of carpenter work. It is two feet high, and contains a runway from an opening in one side of the top, where a piece of cheese is hung. The rat enters the spiral stairway, makes a jump for the cheese, falls through the trapdoor into a pail of water and drowns. Sheriff George Werner declares it is the most successful rat trap he has ever seen.

PAVLOWA IS HARD ON SHOES

The twinkling toes of Pavlowa use up ballet shoes at the rate of a dozen pairs a week. For some time she has had a business contract with a shoemaker in Milan who every fortnight sends her two dozen new pairs of dancing shoes, no matter where she may be.

"The life of a ballet shoe is often very short," said the great Russian dancer, who lives in a beautiful villa just outside London. "Sometimes I discard a pair after dancing in them for only half an hour—perhaps because they stretch and get too wide. During a performance it may happen that I change my shoes three times."

SEEKS FORTUNE IN DIAMONDS

The present whereabouts of the calabash gourd diamonds, estimated to be worth \$500,000, said to have been in the possession of that high and mighty chief, Magato, of the Northeast Transvaal, has been the subject of much speculation.

It was stated at the time that the real object of the commando sent by Paul Kruger, in 1898, against M'feu, the drunken son and successor of the unconquered Magato, was to secure these diamonds. These stones were the presents to their chief made by the Magateze on their return from service in the Kimberley mines, where they had stolen them—an easy thing in the old pre-Rhodes days.

The calabash disappeared when M'feu and his 31 wives escaped from the beleagured Hofstead over the Zambesi.

LAUGHS

Elsie (aged six)—Mamma, can I play I'm entertainin' the little girl next door? Mother—Yes, dear, of course. Elsie—Very well. Then gimme some cake for her.

Mrs. Newwed—What! You have no income but your salary? You told me you had "money to burn." Mr. Newwed—Well, I've just paid for a ton of coal, haven't I?

Mrs. Nuwed—When we got married, didn't you promise me a new hat every season? Nuwed—But you never told me that there were about a dozen hat seasons in a year.

"Pop, what's a monologue?" "A monologue is a conversation between husband and wife." "I thought that was a dialogue." "No; a dialogue is where two persons are speaking."

Edith—That Mr. Phan is conversationally impossible. Ethel—Why so? Edith—We were talking about the theatre, and when I inquired what was his favorite play, he said if he had any favorite it was seeing a man steal second.

"That tall young man over at the other table is said to be the richest man in the hotel. Every time his watch ticks a minute he's ahead a dollar." "I've got one of those dollar watches, too, but mine must be running slow."

Deacon—Susie, I am sorry your papa was not at meeting. Susie—Please, no, sir; he went out walking in the woods. Deacon—I am afraid, Susie, your papa does not fear God. Susie—Oh, yes, sir, I guess he does; he took his gun with him!

"Now, boys," said the Sunday-school teacher, addressing the juvenile class, "can either of you tell me anything about Good Friday?" "Yes, ma'am, I can," replied the boy at the foot of the class. "He was the feller what done the housework for Robinson Crusoe."

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

TUTANKHAMEN TOMB ONLY QUARTER CLEARED

In a lecture before the Scottish Geographical Society at Edinburgh Howard Carter, who was the late Lord Carnarvon's expert assistant in the excavations in the Valley of the Kings, where Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb was discovered, said that, though they had removed from the ante-chamber of the tomb some 600 large and small objects, these represented only a quarter of the material in the tomb.

The task was one which would require two or more years' work. The material yet before them was without doubt of greater interest and value than that which had been dealt with already. The task of the coming winter would be the dismantling of the shrines within the sepulchre and the examination of the royal mummy within its sarcophagus. He believed they would find not only the king intact but also his crowns and other regalia.

HOLLAND'S COLONIES

The foreign possessions of Holland are far more extensive than most people imagine. The Dutch colonial possessions in the East Indies, extending from Sumatra to New Guinea, are nearly 60 times as large as the mother country and have over six times the population. The colonies form two groups known as the Dutch East Indies and the Dutch West Indies. The Dutch East Indies comprise Java and Nadura, the outposts Samatra, Dutch Borneo, Riau-Lingga, Archipelago, Banca, Billiton, Celebes, Molucca, Archipelago, the small Sunda Islands and part of New Guinea, the total area being 736,400 square miles. The Dutch West Indies comprise the colony of Dutch Guiana, or Surinam, in South America, and the Colony of Curacao and the Islands of Aruba, Buera Ayre, Eustatius, Saba and half of St. Martin, the total area being 55,863 square miles. These colonies with Holland itself are so situated as to their difference of longitude, that like the possessions of Great Britain and France, the sun is always shining on one of them.

VETERAN AWAITING \$15,000 BACK PENSIONS

Robert Ludlow Livingston, of Middletown, N. Y., reputed veteran of three wars, who attributes his good health at an age of ninety-seven to "slumgullion and good old grog," has given up his home in the Orange County Poorhouse, where he has been residing temporarily while waiting for a fortune to arrive from Washington.

He was transferred to the Soldiers' Home at Bath, N. Y., where he can fight his wars over with other veterans, to await a decision on his claim for a pension.

Livingston claims to have been a member of Admiral Farragut's crew at the Battle of Mobile Bay. He says he enlisted under the name of Matt Green, principally because he did not wish relatives to trace him. If he gets the pension—and he won't consider the possibility he may not—

the ancient sailor will receive \$72 a month for the remainder of his life and \$12,000 or \$15,000 in back pension.

When Washington decides that Robert Ludlow Livingston is the Matt Green of the Civil War, he expects to move to New York City and do a little scouting for a beverage which he believes necessary for preserving the body and senses of man hale and hearty. He admits it was rum that gave him the strength to dance half an hour at a stretch and, he says, if fortune permits, it will be rum which will give him strength to dance just as spryly five or ten years hence.

Matt's service began during the Mexican War. He says he served in the navy during the Civil War. Then he tricked his way into the Spanish-American War, after being rejected as under weight, by weighing down his shoes, he says.

RUTHLESS OUTLAWS ON BRAZIL'S BORDER

Frontier activities that bring to mind the stirring times of Daniel Boone are being reported in the local press from the Brazilian regions which border on Venepuela and the Guianas. According to these stories, and to reports that have been made from the trouble zones to the government, contriband runners, clandestine gold miners, and various kinds of desperados have been crossing the frontiers into Brazil in increasing numbers and have been leaving trails of blood and ruin.

The vast regions of the Amazon valley, which are but sparsely inhabited, contain many forms of wealth that are within the reach of ruthless outlaws who act in small groups, as well as in big and powerful organizations. It is reported that fortunes in gold and precious stones have been panned from the gravels of the northern streams of Brazil by outlaw miners; that rosewood, mahogany, ebony and other precious woods have been stolen from Brazilian forests, that cattle have been run off the poorly protected ranches, and farms boldly pilfered by raiders. The reports add that these outlaws activities have resulted in many bloody clashes between local inhabitants and bands of frontier runners.

The fact that boundary lines run through trackless wilderness make it almost impossible to establish effective police protection. The few military posts of the Brazilian Government and her neighbors are lost in the vastness of the zones they are supposed to patrol.

The outlaws are escaped convicts from the penal colony in French Guiana, negroes from Barbados, Martinique and Trinidad, riff-raff from English and Dutch Guiana, and adventurers from Venezuela. French, English, Dutch, Spanish, Portuguese and Indian dialects are mixed into a general regional language. The size of the outlaw organizations is governed by the kind of outlawry in which they are engaged. The gold mining and smuggling gangs, for instance, are said to be large and powerful, with headquarters in coast towns.

HERE AND THERE

HUGE SUMS BEING SPENT ON RAILROADS OF FLORIDA

Anticipating another record influx of motorists next winter, \$47,158,500 is being spent on road improvement in thirty of Florida's sixty-three counties, and large sums for road construction are available in the others. It is estimated that more than 100,000 entered the State last winter.

ISLAND OF JAMAICA

The Island of Jamaica, in the West Indies, is situated about 18 degrees north of the equator. Its area is 520 square miles, or about 2,200,000 acres. Of this total, 400,000 acres is rich, low-lying lands fringing the coast, and the remainder is hilly land mounting to an elevation of over 7,000 feet, giving the island a fairly wide range of climate and diversity of products. The growth of the beet sugar industry before the recent great war having threatened to put the cane growers out of business, Jamaica turned to the cultivation of cocoanuts, bananas, citrus fruits, coffee and spices, in all of which she established an export trade. While Kingston, a city of 75,000, is the only city in the island and center of business and shipping activities, there are over a dozen "outposts" scattered about the coast which conduct an export and import trade. British, American and Canadian vessels call at these ports to ship their produce of the parishes served by their various ports, while small coasting vessels also bring the merchandise of the outports to Kingston for shipment abroad. Jamaica's population is some 830,000. Of this total, it is estimated that two per cent. is white, 20 per cent. mixed blood, 75 per cent. negroes and the remainder Chinese and East Indians.

ICE CREAM WAS MADE FIRST IN ITALY

While it is generally accepted that ice cream was first made in Italy, perhaps at about the time America was discovered, it was left to the United States to develop the industry on a great scale, Prof. Martin Mortensen, head of the Department of Dairying in the Iowa State College, said recently at the World's Dairy Congress.

It is thought that ice cream was introduced into France about 1550, and the earliest printed record of it in England was found in a house-keeping magazine published in 1786. But it was not until 1857 that the first wholesale ice cream business was started by Jacob Russell in Baltimore.

The ice cream business in the United States increased from 80,000,000 gallons in 1909 to 263,529,000 gallons in 1912. The ice cream cone was invented in 1904.

Professor Mortensen attributed the great success of the industry to the sound business principles employed by the men who entered it. He said the rapid development of machinery, trade journals and instruction in colleges in the art of ice cream making had done much to increase the business.

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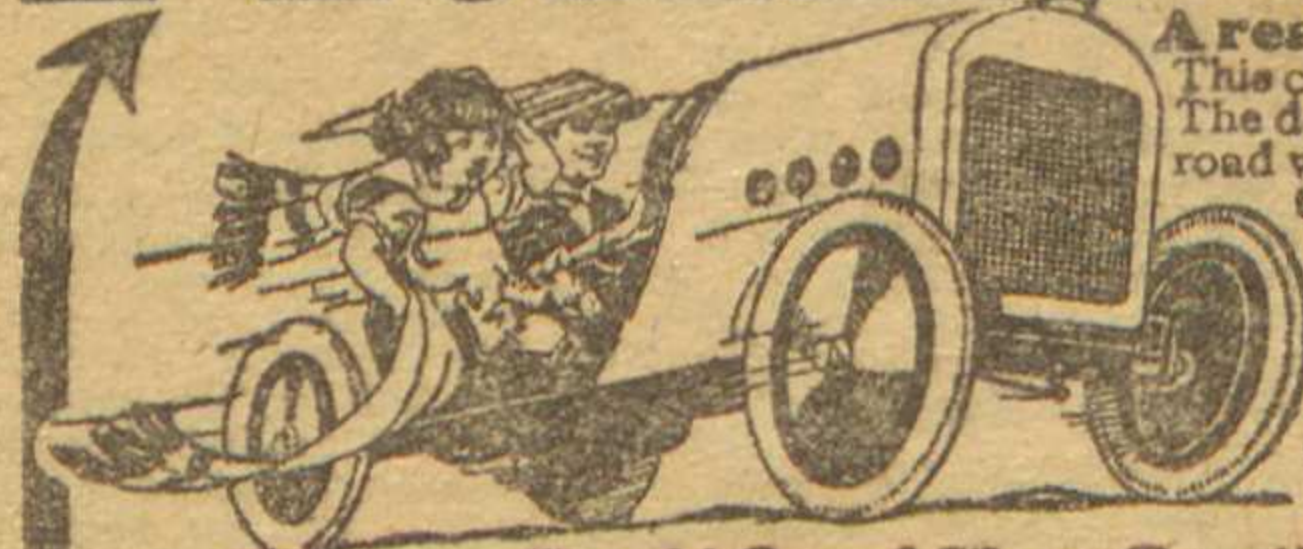
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